

FEBRUARY 1999

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CHINA TOURISM

PLACES FOR
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223

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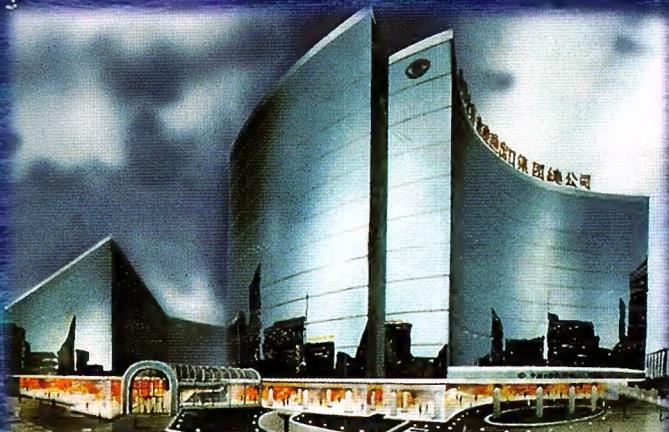
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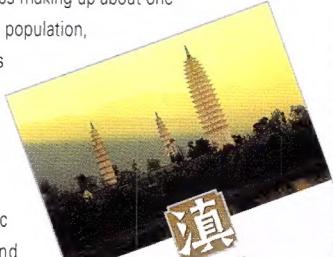
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Focus on Yunnan

The mountainous wonderland of Yunnan enjoys a favourable warm climate year round. Its capital, Kunming, has the honourable name, the "Spring City", and sits alongside Yunnan's largest lake, Dianchi. The province is full of natural wonders and cultural relics, such as the Stone Forests, the Shangri-La, and the ancient cities of Dali and Lijiang. With over 20 diverse ethnic groups making up about one-third of the population, opportunities abound for you to see their characteristic cultures and customs.



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Focus on Yunnan

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Situated on the southeast coast, Fujian Province overlooks Taiwan Island across the Taiwan Strait. Its mountainous landscape includes the Wuyi Mountain Scenic Area where Mt. Huanggang, the highest peak in eastern China, is found. Its zigzag coastlines, numerous beaches and charming seas offer spectacular scenic beauty as well as historical and cultural interest, in such places as the Drum Wave Islet in Xiamen and the Mazu Temple in Meizhou Island.

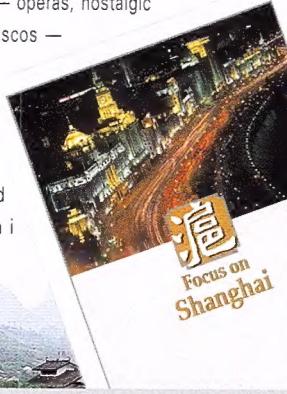


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Focus on Shanghai

Shanghai, the largest metropolis in China, and formerly the Far East financial centre, has experienced dramatic development over the past decade. The world-famous Bund along the Huangpu River shows you buildings of different historical periods and varied architectural styles, while skyscrapers are rising in the new area of Pudong. Shanghai's multiculturalism is seen in its music — operas, nostalgic jazz and discos — and in the busy commercial district of Nanjing and Huaihai streets.



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Focus on Shanghai

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Focus on Shaanxi

Shaanxi is the cradle of the Chinese civilisation and Xi'an was the capital of 13 dynasties. This has left Shaanxi a rich legacy of historical sites and cultural relics. In the provincial capital Xi'an, there is the fascinating terracotta army unearthed from the tomb of the First Emperor, Qin Shi Huang; the tomb of Wu Zetian, China's first Tang-dynasty empress; and the stele forest. The province's beauty is capped with the sheer cliffs of Mount Huashan and the yellow earth of the Loess Plateau.

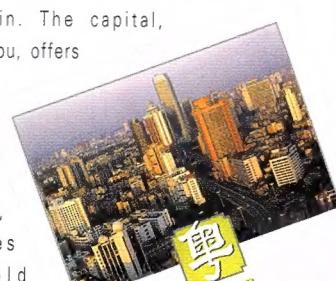


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Focus on Shaanxi

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Focus on Guangdong

An important gateway into China, the fertile Pearl River Delta of the southern province of Guangdong fans out from Guangzhou to the South China Sea and borders Hong Kong and Macau. The province's natural scenic spots include the limestone pinnacles of Zhaoqing's Seven Star Crags, the red sandstone of Danxia Mountain, and the volcanic beauty of Xiqiao Mountain. The capital, Guangzhou, offers plenty of history in its museums, temples, mosques and old colonial buildings.



粤
Focus on Guangdong

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Wonders of Hong Kong

More than a year after Hong Kong's return to China, this Pearl of the Orient remains an important financial and trade centre. In the favoured tourist destination where the East blends with the West, you can marvel at Hong Kong's magnificent harbour view and bustling streets, visit the world's tallest seated outdoor bronze Buddha, indulge in a shopping spree, see the charming outlying islands and numerous beautiful beaches, and try the ubiquitous restaurants that satisfy all desires.

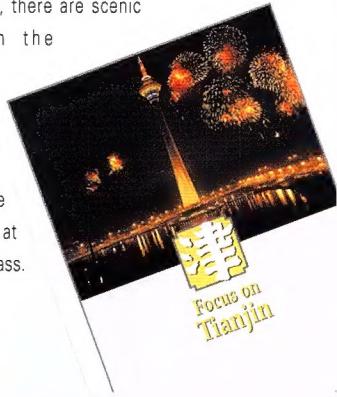


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Focus on Tianjin

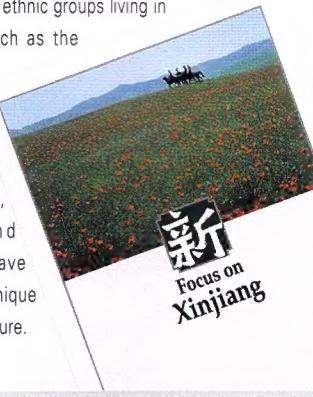
Tianjin, one of the four municipalities under direct Central Government administration, is an important industrial and commercial centre of China and the biggest port in the north. The history of the city can be found in its Ancient Culture Street, 100-year-old Western-style buildings, Opera Museum and Mazu Temple. Besides the TV Tower and the Haihe River in the city, there are scenic spots in the outskirts, including the Dule Temple and the Great Wall at Huangya Pass.



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Focus on Xinjiang

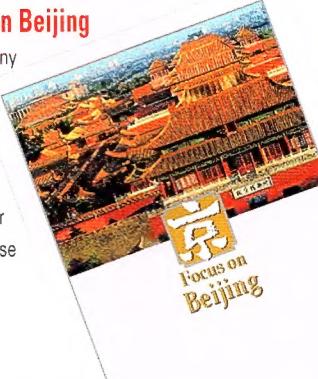
On the vast land of Xinjiang in Northwest China, there are mountains, basins, deserts and lakes, which provide tourists with numerous attractions — ruins of ancient cities and tombs along the Silk Road; Turpan, an oasis in the desert; Kanas Lake, a gem imbedded in the Altay Mountains; Bayanbulak — the Swan Lake; and the world's second largest desert, the Taklimakan. The minority ethnic groups living in Xinjiang, such as the Uygur, Kazak, Mongolian, Uzbek, Tajik, Xibe, Kirgiz and Tatar, all have their own unique colourful culture.



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Focus on Beijing

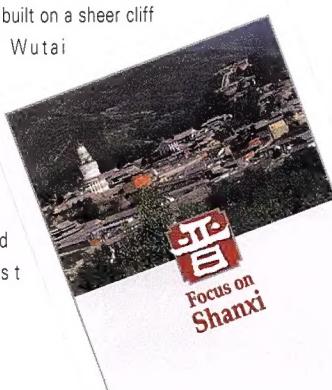
Beijing is a metropolis of everlasting charm. There are simply too many captivating things to see, to experience and to taste in this grand city with both old glamour and new mobility. There are historical sites such as the Palace Museum (the Forbidden City), the Temple of Heaven, the Summer Palace, and the Ming Tombs; there are also many scenic spots in its outskirts. Recently, tours have been organised for visitors to taste the real Beijing flavour of life — touring the small back lanes, having tea in a traditional-style teahouse and enjoying the Peking Opera.



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Focus on Shanxi

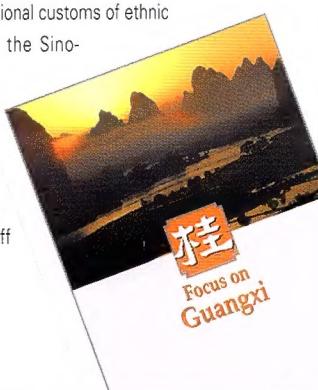
Shanxi Province, one of the birthplaces of the Chinese civilisation, has impressive ancient architecture and a wealth of well-preserved Buddhist temples, monasteries and grottoes. Among the most famous are the Yungang Grottoes containing some of China's oldest sculptures and Buddhist art, the Yongle Palace, the Jinci Temple, the Hanging Monastery built on a sheer cliff and the Wutai Mountain, one of China's most famous sacred Buddhist lands.



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Focus on Guangxi

Unusual topography has endowed the province with numerous spectacular karst formations — limestone caves, pinnacles and rocks. The most famous and enchanting scenic spot is Guilin, and the most travelled route, on the Lijiang River from Guilin to Yangshuo. The coastal city of Beihai has the country's largest beach, the Silver Beach. Other attractions include the varied traditional customs of ethnic minorities, the Sino-Vietnamese border area, and the mysterious Huashan cliff paintings.



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Photos & article by Hua Nin

Yunnan Province in Southwest China borders three of China's neighbours — Myanmar, Laos and Vietnam. Today, several dozen entry ports have been opened along the 4,060-kilometre-long border and the cross-border tourist programs have attracted tens of thousands of travellers. Setting off from Yunnan, our reporter visited a series of towns and cities in Yunnan as well as in the neighbouring countries, such as Namhkam and Bhamo of Myanmar, Muang Xay and Luang Prabang of Laos, and Lao Cai of Vietnam. Along his way he saw varied customs of different ethnic groups living in the border areas.

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Hoarfrost

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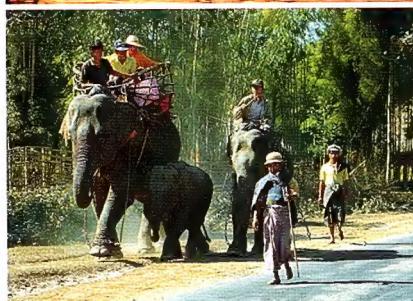
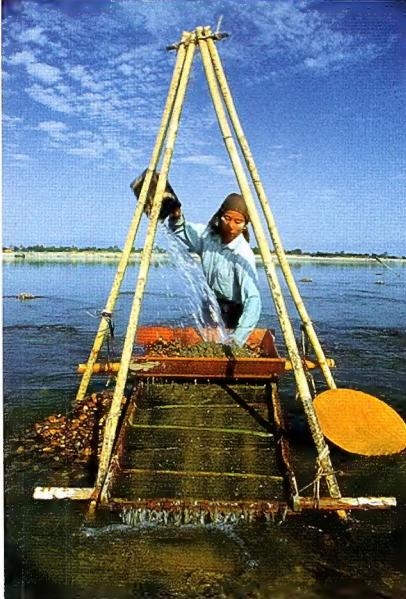
There are many places in China for admiring the beautiful snow scenes. In Fuyun, where the cold winter lasts for seven months, there is always plentiful snowfall in winter; in the Twin Peaks Forestry Farm, the thick and soft snow covering the roofs and the ground creates a poetic landscape. But it is not only in the north that one can see snow. Mount Huangshan in the south, for example, presents visitors with a wonderful white world in winter.

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Even in winter, the sun is pleasantly warm and the wind agreeably gentle in Sanya. Throughout most of the year, the common comment on the weather of the southmost city on Hainan Island is "very hot". At Yalong Bay, the best swimming spot on the island, tourists can also rent speedboats and sailing boats on the beach. On Wuzhi Island, a former military forbidden zone, there is the most complete preservation of the natural resources. With beautiful coral reefs and schools of fish, it is an ideal place for diving and snorkelling lovers.

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FROM THE EDITOR

The border region of China, Vietnam, Myanmar and Laos boasts an exotic ethnic colour. The customs and traditions there bewitch numerous visitors pouring into the area from around the world every year. Shuttling across the borders of these four countries, you will be amazed by the colourful cultures of different peoples, and understand the ways in which these varied minority groups have influenced each other in their coexistence.

Sanya in Hainan Island is a paradise in South China for those longing for a relaxing vacation. The tourist spot which enjoys a pleasant climate all year round is an ideal holiday resort even in winter. Yalong Bay is a national-level tourist area complete with white sand and blue water which will drive aquatics-lovers crazy. You can really refresh yourself by indulging in the vivid atmosphere of this pleasing South China city.

We also take into consideration readers who are fond of a white winter. There are many snow-admiring spots scattered on the vast territory of China and every one of them possesses its unique beauty. In this issue we have included some wonderful spots in the country where you can admire the snow. Furthermore, detailed and practical information about these sites are provided for your reference.

Photo by Shi Baoxiu

New Services, China Southern Airlines

Passengers taking China Southern Airlines' flights leaving from Shenzhen can go through all formalities and get their boarding cards at the booking offices in downtown Shenzhen now. This new service makes it possible for passengers to arrive at the airport as late as 15 minutes before takeoff.

Cleaning of Dianchi Lake, Yunnan

A large-scale cleaning project will be carried out soon at the Dianchi Lake in Kunming, capital of Southwest China's Yunnan Province, which will host the World Gardening Expo '99.

From May to October, the algae multiply at great speed in the nearly 300-square-kilometre lake, with the situation even more serious in Caohai (Grass Sea), the northern part of Dianchi Lake, in the southern suburbs of the city. The project aims at cleaning the 10-square-kilometre water surface of Caohai. If the year brings plentiful rainfall, researchers will cure the problem mainly through managing water resources, assisted by biological treatments. If it turns out to be a year of drought, the algae will have to be dug out by machines.

Sightseeing Tower, Macao

A sightseeing tower is being constructed in Macao and expected to be completed by April 2000. Standing 338 metres high, the tower will have conference rooms and parking lots inside. Construction of the tower started in June 1998 and so far the circular foundation of 20 metres in diameter has taken shape. The Macao Tourism and Amusement Company, which runs the franchised casino business in the city, will spend 1 billion patacas (US\$125 million) on the project.

Yuan and Ming Tombs Discovered, Shandong

Two ancient tombs dating back to the Yuan and Ming dynasties have been discovered in the city of Heze, Shandong Province. Among the abundant relics unearthed are porcelain pots, bronze mirrors and funeral artefacts. Also considered as important treasures are the stone sculptures set in front of the tombs, featuring human images, sheep, tigers and horses, which were typical commemorative figures of the times. The discovery has provided valuable insights for archaeological research on the folk customs of the two dynasties.

New Railway, Xinjiang

A railway linking the cities of Korla and Aksu in the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region in Northwest China has gone into operation. The 525-kilometre new rail line is part of an extension project of the Southern Xinjiang Railway. The extension will eventually run 969 kilometres all the way to the border city of Kashgar.

Ancient Frescoes on Show, Xi'an

China's most treasured ancient murals will be displayed in Xi'an, capital of Shaanxi Province in the Northwest. The sponsor of the exhibition, the Shaanxi History Museum, is planning on turning an underground hall into a 3,000-square metre exhibition centre for 540 original murals discovered in tombs of the Tang Dynasty. Xi'an was the capital of the Tang Dynasty.

'Shaking Coin Tree' Collected by Museum, Beijing

"Yao Qian Shu", literally meaning "Shaking Coin Tree", is a legendary term that took root long ago in the Chinese culture. Now a replica of such a tree has been made by the Sichuan Provincial Museum and collected by the Palace Museum in Beijing.

The tree is made of bronze, bronze-plated alloy, gold, silver, and five kinds of rare gems. Instead of leaves, the tree has ancient square-holed coins. On top of the tree stands a gold-plated phoenix whose bill carries a pearl. Besides the bird, there is Chang E, the Chinese moon goddess, who holds a silver-plated round moon.

Legend about "Yao Qian Shu" can be traced to the Han Dynasty about 2,000 years ago. It was part of the tree-worshipping rituals of the ancient Chinese in the Southwest. At that time, trees were seen as "stairways to heaven". When coins came into the lives of the Chinese, they built such a bronze tree to worship.

Ecological Museum, Guizhou

The Suoga Ecological Museum opened in November 1998 in Southwest China's Guizhou Province. It is the first of its kind in Asia and also the first Sino-Norwegian co-operative project in the field of culture. Displayed in the museum are the customs and traditions of the local Miao people, including their wedding ceremonies, funerals, sacrifices and arts such as music and dance, and embroidery and batik. The purpose of the museum is to protect the cultural heritage and folklore as well as natural scenery.

Suoga is a town in the Liuzhi Special District in western Guizhou. This mountainous area is inhabited by people of the Miao ethnic group who have kept their traditional way of life.

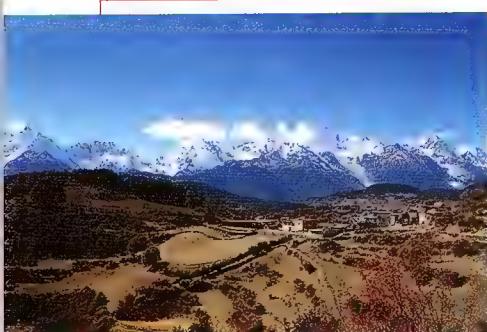


Direct Flight from Beijing to Vienna

Since December 2, 1998, Air China has re-launched its air route from Beijing to Vienna. Every Wednesday and Sunday, an airbus-340 flies from Beijing via Vienna to Zurich. The Beijing-Vienna section lasts 10 hours.

Including the Beijing-Vienna route and the Beijing-Zurich route provided by Air China and Austrian Airlines, and Air China and Swissair respectively, there are now every week five flights from China's capital to Vienna, and four to Zurich, providing more alternatives for travellers.

Besides, the Air China Office in Zurich provides its passengers with services such as transit arrangements to other European countries and hotel reservation. For Chinese passengers holding a business passport, the office can help them apply for a 24- or 48-hour transit visa.



Sight-seeing Bus Route in Xiamen

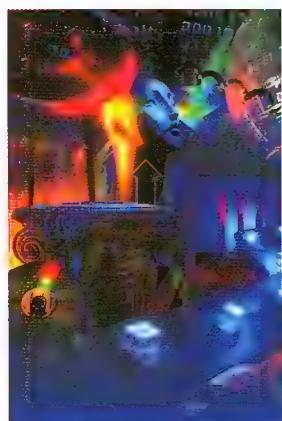
In most of the major cities around the world, there are sightseeing bus routes specially designed for the sake of tourists to link up various scenic spots in the area. Now, in the city of Xiamen, Fujian, a touring bus route has also been established.

This sight-seeing bus route, totalling 42 kilometres, stops at the airport, the rail station, the ferry pier, key scenic spots as well as major hotels. The outlook of the luxurious touring buses is really smart, decorated with representative Xiamen scenery. Inside each bus, tourists can find comfortable seats, a mini bar, audio and visual equipment, and telephones.



The Opening of an Ultra-modern Amusement Park

The largest indoor amusement park in China, the hi-tech "Future Age", covering 33,815 square metres, has now opened in Shenzhen.



In the main hall of the park named Today's World, you can find an art marketplace, a Broadway theatre, an art gallery and a German-style pub. The Forest Paradise section has a bizarre "tree of the future" where various mechanical animals like a vulture, a hawk, a python, a chameleon, and a big parrot are "hiding". The Future Market demonstrates the "sea market" and "space market" in the future, and entertainment is provided here. The Exploration Paradise is a world of fantasy and scientific knowledge for you to explore. Moreover, there is a Future Age Centre, the largest indoor

theatre in the country for staging variety shows. The programs performed here are all scientific stories taking place in the future, featuring the special effects of thunder, lightning, flood, earthquake, tsunami and volcanic eruption, for a dramatic and exciting experience.



Dêqên Airport in Yunnan Opens in 1999

Since the rumour spread that the legendary Shangri-La is found in Dêqên County in Yunnan, many people want to visit this beautiful and serene place for a romantic holiday. However, the area is not well connected by transport and it takes two days to get there from Kunming by car.

In order to promote tourism in Dêqên, 250 million yuan has been invested in building the Dêqên Airport which will be completed in June 1999. After the airport is put into operation, it will take only 45 minutes to fly from the capital of Yunnan to this tourist spot.



Guangdong Humen Sea Battles Museum

Hong Kong's return to China on July 1, 1997 reminded people once again of the Opium War which occurred in the late Qing Dynasty. The Guangdong

Humen Opium War Sea Battles Museum due to open in January 1999 can definitely satisfy those who are interested in this historical incident. Covering a floor space of 150,000 square metres, the museum is composed of a three-storey main exhibition hall and four subsidiary halls.

The Jinsuo Tongguan Bridge nearby leads to the Memorial Square and the Sea-viewing Terrace.

The batteries and warships in the vicinity are reminiscent of the scenes of the sea battles between China and its invaders that took place

150 years ago.







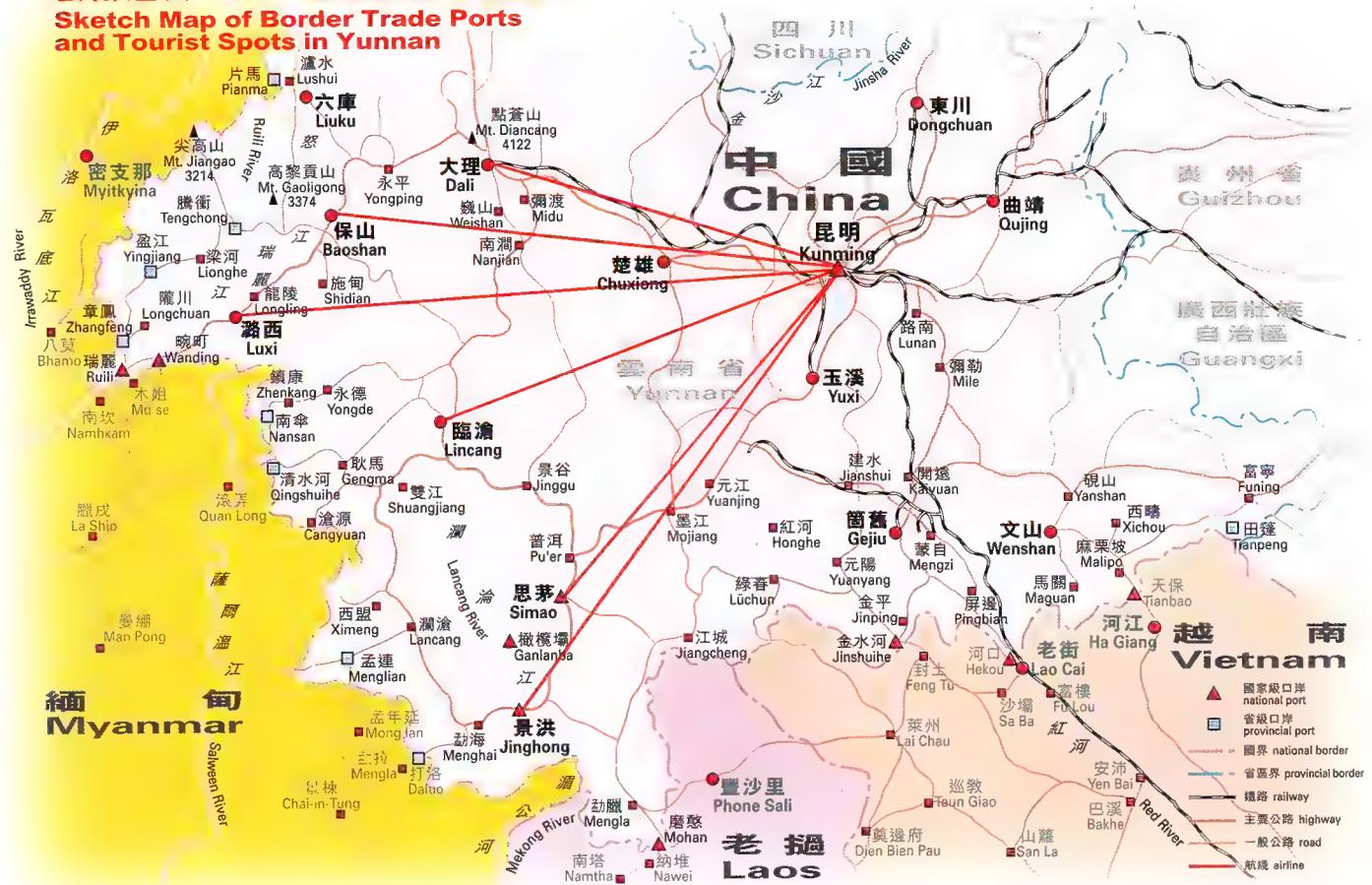
The border areas of Yunnan Province — Myanmar on the west and Laos and Vietnam on the south — seem to be tucked away in the remotest corner of the world and enshrouded in mystery. In ancient times Yunnan was a link on the famed Southwest Silk Road. During World War II, the Yunnan-Myanmar Road and the Myanmar-Vietnam Railway provided vital transportation to the resistance fighters in their battles against Japanese invaders. Today, China, Myanmar, Laos and Vietnam have all opened their boundaries to

each other, and, as a result, border trade and tourism have flourished as never before. Yunnan is attracting curious visitors who come in droves to explore this province's exotic cultural roots.

Along China's 4,060-kilometre-long boundary line in Yunnan, several dozen entry and exit ports have been established. These include Ruili, Zhangfeng and Wanding of Dehong Prefecture; Menghai, Daluo, Jinghong, Mohan of Xishuangbanna; Hekou of Honghe Prefecture, and Malipo of Wenshan Prefecture. With various cross-border tourist programmes, Yunnan has become one of the most active Chinese provinces in developing border tourism.

雲南邊貿口岸、邊境旅遊示意圖

Sketch Map of Border Trade Ports and Tourist Spots in Yunnan



Cross-Border Tour in Yunnan, Myanmar, Laos and Vietnam

Photos & article by Hua Nian



Cross-Border Tour in Yunnan, Myanmar, Laos and Vietnam(I)

From Ruili, Yunnan to Namhkam and Mu-se, Myanmar

The Ruili River in southwest Dehong Prefecture forms a section of the Sino-Burmese border line. On the Chinese side of the river sits the famous border city of Ruili, whose name evokes memories of the familiar song, *There Is a Beautiful Place*, which sings the praise of Ruili's fertile, graceful and auspicious land.

Ruili: An Auspicious and Beautiful Place

Entering the flat land where Ruili is located, one is immediately reminded of the poetic meaning of its name — "auspicious and graceful". Surrounded by mountains, it is indeed a fertile land, where the roofs of Dai-style bamboo

abodes gleam amidst green tropical fruit trees. Hill slopes are covered with verdant rubber tree plantations. The Ruili River sparkles in the sun, and the ferry crossings teem with boats and bamboo rafts, knitting natural scenery and local action into a picture of indescribable quality.

Ethnic minority people, mainly the Dais, Jingpos, De'angs and Archangs, comprise over 60 percent of the population of Ruili. Each ethnic group has retained its

own unique folklore. The Dai people, the most populous among these ethnic minorities, are the most eye-catching with their characteristic costumes and colourful culture.

A closer look at the Dai people of Ruili reveals a difference from the Dais who inhabit Xishuangbanna. For instance, only the Dai women of Ruili are fond of dabbing their faces with a kind of golden lotion both for beauty and for protection against the sun. This habit is shared by the Burmese people living on the other side of the border river and indicates the congeniality between the two different cultures.

Village Gateways to China

Ruili sits opposite Namhkam and Mu-se of Myanmar across a section of the border line that extends for a distance of 141.4 kilometres to form an apparent assembly of two countries and three cities. The cultural heritage derived from this unique combination never fails to fascinate visitors from the outside world. On this long borderline are 54 boundary landmarks in large and medium sizes as well as innumerable

Previous page:

1. Fetching water from a well which lies on the border
2. Bicycling on a border road

This page:

1. At the Bingmao Ferry Crossing on the Ruili River, the riverside sculpture is fittingly entitled Drinking from the Same River.
2. A national boundary sign stands in a street of Yinjing Village, which is linked with the Moong Siu Village of Myanmar.
3. A Burmese farmer riding his buffalo heading for the Yinjing Village in China
4. The land of Ruili: peaceful, graceful and prosperous





small border signs and 28 ferry crossings. The people on both sides live in such harmony and peace that these signs seem non-existent. In fact, several dozen villages are linked across the border with boundary signs erected right in the middle of the villages. Villagers, however, never bother to distinguish which part of the village belongs to which country. In this part of the world, anything can serve as a boundary sign — a ditch, a well, a road, a bridge, a bamboo grove, and even a field ridge. It is common for a Chinese hen to lay eggs in Myanmar, or a Burmese vine to crawl over and bear a melon in China.

Yinjing Village by State Highway 320 is separated from a Burmese village by a 1.6-metre-wide dirt road, and villagers from both countries draw water from the same well. A national gateway stands symbolically by the highway, drawing visitors to marvel at the situation.

Tunhong Village, which straddles the border across the Ruili River, has a boundary sign erected in a village house on each side. It is indeed a case of "one family, two countries".

Border City Thronged with Merchants

Visitors to Ruili are surprised that this picturesque city is

also a booming commercial centre. It is a small city, with a population of no more than 100,000, including farmers in the surrounding rural areas, but there is no lack of tall buildings and star-rated hotels. During the day the streets are forever crowded with shoppers, and at night, the city is aglow with lights. The precious-stone market in the northwestern corner of the city is a 32,000-square-metre affair, and the 1,000 shops there sell goods ranging from general merchandise to local specialities and wood carvings. But most sell jade since Ruili is close to a famed jade producer in Myanmar. The market is thronged with various merchants — Hans, minority ethnic peoples, Burmese, Indians, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis — bargaining in every conceivable dialect.

Many Burmese have become local residents, and their shops are veritable museums of pearls, gems and raw jade. Most visitors are tempted to buy, whether they are knowledgeable or not.

Apart from the jade market in the city, there is a border trade zone known as the Sino-Burmese Street, four kilometres southeast of the city where China and Myanmar are separated by a mere street.





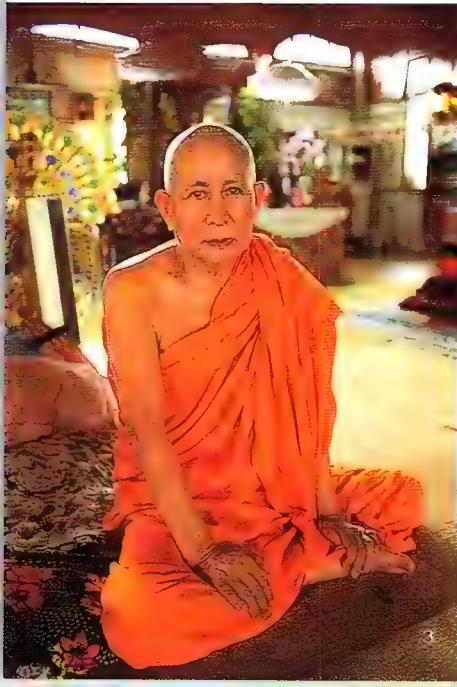
The Famous Golden Pagoda of Southeast Asia

No visit to Ruili is complete without seeing the folklore of the Dai people and visiting the Buddhist temples. Each Dai village contains a Buddhist temple with a splendid pagoda. The most famous ones are the Hansa Temple and the Great Denghan Temple, both of which are tucked away in large garden-like villages. Of all the Buddhist temples in Ruili, the Hansa Temple is of the highest grade. The Great Denghan Temple, built during the early Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), resembles an ancient Dai palace and has become the location for a feature film.

The Jiele Golden Pagoda is the tallest of its kind in the entire Dehong Prefecture, as well as one of the best known pagodas in the whole of southeast Asia.

Situated in Jiele Village seven kilometres east of downtown Ruili, this temple contains a splendid 40-metre-tall main pagoda surrounded by 16 minor ones. The pagodas are gilded, with tops graced by a holy umbrella, a weathercock, and silver bells which jingle gently in the breeze.

These pagodas have a long history, although their exact date of construction remains unknown. History books indicate that bones of a bear, sparrow, duck, ox and three other animals were discovered during the reign of Prince Mala; when the Buddha, during his 550-round reincarnations returned as one of these animals each time, it was thus believed that the Buddha himself had lived for a while in Jiele. For this reason the prince had this pagoda constructed and named it Golden Bear Pagoda. The pagoda has been





reconstructed on many occasions, the latest known date was in 1756, or the 2,300th year of the Buddhist calendar.

A One-tree Forest and a Thundering Waterfall

Banyan trees with their extensive foliage are a typical subtropical scene in southwest Yunnan. Two of them, one in Jiedonglu Village about two kilometres from downtown Ruili, and another by the State Highway 320 near the Ruili River Bridge, have become famed landmarks. Both trees feature thick trunks and entangled branches. Several dozen aerial roots have transformed into new trunks, turning each tree into a forest that throws its shadow over half a hectare of land.

In the rural areas of Ruili City there are many primitive forests scenes. In the Zhaduo Waterfall Scenic Zone, for example, a waterfall is tucked away in the heavily wooded Moli Gorge on the Zhaduo River, a tributary of the Ruili River.

The word "zhaduo" means "footprint of the Buddha" in the Dai language, and the surface of a rock in the place indeed contains a huge depression in the shape of the sole of a foot, reportedly left by the Buddha during one of his excursions. A record of this event is found in a Buddhist scripture; thus the Chinese and Burmese on both sides of the border regard the place as a sanctuary and have had a pagoda built here. Nearby there are a cluster of hot springs and sparkling streams, and attractions are found here and there. The waterfall is certainly the most eye-catching of all. Trekking for about 30 minutes

from the Buddha's Footprint, one hears the thundering of a waterfall that tumbles down a 40-metre-high cliff in the depth of a rain forest and spits misty clouds up into the sky.

A Visit to Myanmar Via Ferry

Few visitors to Ruili would give up the opportunity to cross the boundary for a visit to Myanmar. Jiegao is an important access point into Myanmar. A tall gateway is laid out picturesquely among the palatial buildings in Mu-se, an important city in northern Myanmar facing Ruili. However, most people who enter Myanmar via Jiegao are merchants. Tourists tend to go to Namhkam in

1. Jiele Golden Pagoda — a renowned pagoda in Southeast Asia
2. Removing one's shoes before entering a temple
3. The head monk of the Hansa Temple who is also the vice-president of the Chinese Buddhism Association
4. Timber imported from Myanmar extending over a pier beside Ruili River
5. Monks having lunch after the Door-closing Festival
6. The Ruili River Bridge leads to the Jiegao Economic Development Zone.
7. The ceiling of the porch of the Great Denghan Temple is decorated with pictures depicting Buddhist stories.





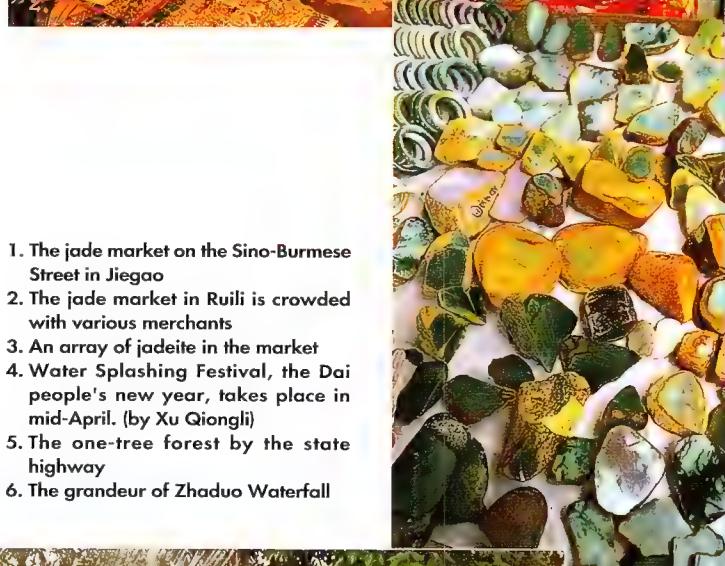
Myanmar by way of the Nongdao port.

Nongdao, situated more than 30 kilometres to the west of Ruili, takes the form of a peninsula since it is situated where the Ruili River flows westward and joins the Nanyuan River from the northwest. The Jiemao Village of Nongdao, inhabited by the Dai people, is linked with a Burmese village. Though the villagers belong to two different

countries, they fetch water from the same well. A group of sculptures, fittingly named Drinking from the Same River, have been erected at a ferry crossing going to Namhkam.

Namhkam is a major city in north Myanmar, where the people follow a lifestyle similar to their northern neighbours. Hordes of Chinese visitors arrive here to marvel at the folklore and scenery of the city. We also boarded a ferry to Namhkam.

Banyan trees, with their extensive foliage, are a typical subtropical scene in southwest Yunnan. One such tree in Jiedonglü Village, and another by State Highway 320 near the Ruili River Bridge, have become famed landmarks of Ruili.



1. The jade market on the Sino-Burmese Street in Jiegao
2. The jade market in Ruili is crowded with various merchants
3. An array of jadeite in the market
4. Water Splashing Festival, the Dai people's new year, takes place in mid-April. (by Xu Qiongli)
5. The one-tree forest by the state highway
6. The grandeur of Zhaduo Waterfall







Chinese Television and Mobile Phones

Our tourist group passed through the border formalities with great ease and a minibus brought us into Namhkam.

Namhkam is under the jurisdiction of the State of Shan. The Shan people are of the same ethnic origin as the Dais of China, who were also called Shan in ancient times. That is why one can see little difference between the Shans and the Dais in attire, language, customs and habits. Myanmar's administrative system divides the country into seven provinces and seven states according to the ethnic backgrounds of the people. Thus in the State of Shan the majority of the population are Shans.

Visitors to Namhkam may be surprised by the fact that the local people can speak different languages, including Burmese, Shan and the local Chinese dialect of Yunnan. Many local shops erect signboards written in both Burmese and Chinese, so there is no such thing as a language barrier for

visitors from China. The Chinese currency, Renminbi, is used in local stores and restaurants, and in fact is welcomed by the local merchants.

The doors of dwellings in Namhkam are always unlocked, a testimony to its peace and social order. Seeing my curiosity, a local man greeted me courteously and ushered me into his home, a bamboo structure. The house was simply furnished.

On the walls were a Burmese calendar and pictures, as well as Chinese New Year paintings. The television set was tuned to a Chinese station. It appears that in the border region of Myanmar it is easier for residents to tune into a Chinese television station than a Burmese one. The same is true with telecommunications.





The mobile phones used by the people of Myanmar are hooked up with Chinese networks. When I used the mobile phone, the sound came through clear and crisp, and my friend at the other end of the line could

not believe that I was talking to him from Myanmar.

Namhkam's Temples and Performances

Buddhism is the national religion of Myanmar. The land, clustered with temples and pagodas, is known as the "Kingdom of 10,000 Pagodas". Namhkam is no exception.

Namhkam is famous for a giant statue of the Buddha sitting cross-legged on a suburban highland facing downtown. The giant Buddha is surrounded by Buddhist pagodas, temples

and sculptures depicting Buddhist stories. One group of sculptures is a rendition of the Buddha and his 28 disciples collecting alms.

It appears that in the border region of Myanmar it is easier for residents to tune into broadcasts from Chinese television stations than Burmese ones. Also, many of them connect their mobile phones with the Chinese networks.

By custom every visitor to a local temple is obliged to remove his or her shoes before entering the hall. Once inside, everyone sits or kneels before the statue. There are a number of boxes in the hall, inscribed in both Chinese and

Burmese to solicit donations. Both the Shan people of Myanmar and the Dai people of China follow the Hinayana sect of Buddhism, and instead of burning incense sticks like

1. The Dai-style national gate at Bingmao
2. Burmese women dab their faces with a golden lotion.
3. A ferry carrying people from both countries to Namhkam
4. The main street in Namhkam
5. Baisha Pagoda in Mu-se (by Shi Bing)
6. A Chinese young lady with three transsexual dancers
7. A shop selling Buddhist niches





Buddhists in the north do, they offer fresh flowers as tribute to the Buddha. That is why the smoke of burning incense sticks is absent in Burmese temples, which are instead filled with the delicate scent of flowers.

The Mangla Temple is supposed to bring happiness to its worshippers. The temple is known for its pagoda, which resembles an oversized conch hanging midway in the sky. Following a visit to the temple, I went to the tourists' centre where the main hall doubles as a restaurant and a theatre. Several hundred visitors were having their meal while watching singing and ethnic dancing performances. The performances accurately shed light on the local culture, even though they were not very professional.

The performances given at 3:30 p.m. were by transsexual dancers. Most of the performers came from Thailand, attracted by the flourishing border tourism in this area. Their performances, however, were smaller in scale and less

impressive than those in their own country.

The next programme, of course, was shopping and buying jade articles in particular. Jade ware for sale in Namhkam is usually cheaper than in Ruili, because it is closer to the State of Kachin, the famed land of jadeite.



1. Students in Myanmar
2. The group of sculptures featuring Sakyamuni and his disciples collecting alms
3. The famous pagoda of the Mangla Temple

The Long History of China-Myanmar Relations

The Burmese living by the China-Myanmar border have long called the Chinese "ruimiao baobo", which in Burmese means "relatives and brothers". The Dais, Jingpos and De'angs on the Chinese side are of the same ethnic origins as the Shans, Kachins and Benglongs respectively, on the other side. Traditions of intermarriage, visiting and open markets have thus led to a very intimate relationship.

Throughout history, China has known Myanmar by different names. In the Han Dynasty (206 B.C.-A.D.220), it was the State of Shan, because the Chinese knew only this state in northern Myanmar. From the Three Kingdoms Period through the Tang Dynasty (220-907), Myanmar was called the State of Piao, which was described as a country "with proper order between the king and his subjects, between the fathers and sons, and between the elderly and young". In the Song Dynasty (960-1127), it was called Pagan since Pagan served as the capital. By the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368), Pagan was known as Mianguo (*mian* meaning remote and *guo*, country). Later in the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), *dian*, meaning a place in the mountains, was added to make Miandian, the name that remains today.

Around the 4th century B.C., Zhuang Jue of the State of Chu led an army into Yunnan, occupying the area and initiating trade with neighbouring countries; thus the Southwest Silk Road took shape. During the Han Dynasty, the states of Myanmar sent their diplomatic envoys five times to the Han imperial court. During the Three Kingdoms Period, the well-respected Zhuge Liang stationed troops at Baoshan in Yunnan, leaving in-depth cultural influence in the surrounding area. When the Nanzhao Kingdom ruled Yunnan, the Tang court established relations with all the 18 tribes and 298 clans

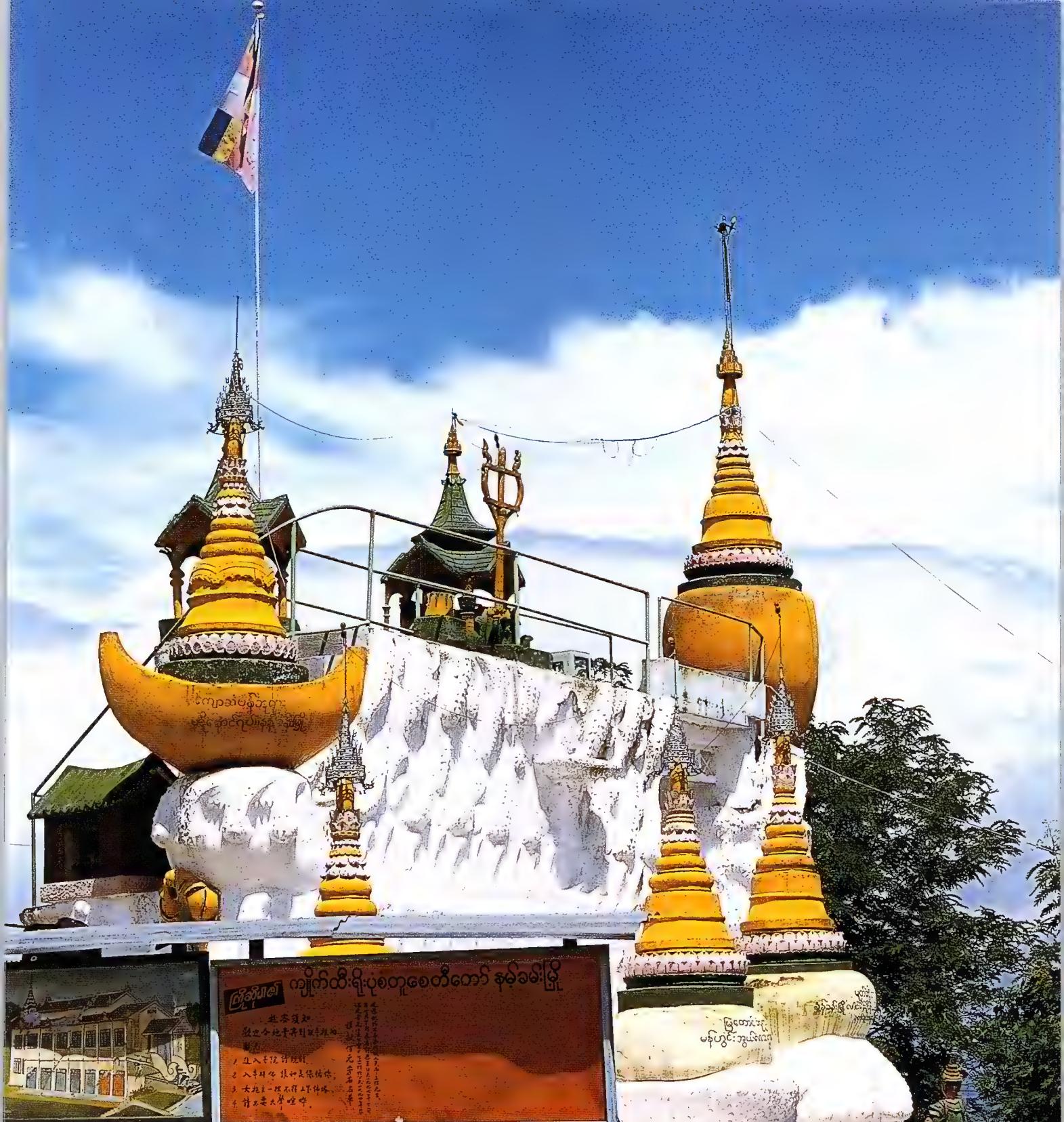
in Myanmar. In the latter part of the Pagan Kingdom, the royal house sent rare white elephants to the Song court as gifts. Exchanges between China and Myanmar continued for all the succeeding dynasties.

In the early Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), when Zhu Youlang was fighting the Manchus who established this new dynasty, he retreated to Yunnan and proclaimed himself the Emperor Yongli. Defeated in his last battle, he fled to the ancient Myanmar capital Ava with the king's approval. The Manchus demanded his repatriation. Although the Myanmar king first refused he later turned him over when the Chinese agreed to hand over a rebellious tribal chieftain.

During World War II, in 1941, Japan attacked Myanmar with a 100,000-strong force. The commander of the British colonial force in Myanmar asked the Chinese government to send troops. China immediately mobilised 100,000 men who entered Myanmar by the Yunnan-Myanmar Road and fought bravely side by side with the Burmese. In November 1943, China again mobilised 160,000 soldiers to counter attack the Japanese force in the China-India-Myanmar war region to reopen the Yunnan-Burma supply line which had been cut off by the Japanese.

The Yunnan-Burma Highway and the China-India Highway, which started from the Indian border town Likhapani and connected with the Yunnan-Burma Highway via Myitkyina, Bhamo and Namhkam, was built by Chinese and Burmese road builders and allied soldiers under extremely harsh conditions. Now, they still play an important role in trade and tourism exchange.

Translated by Li Zhenguo





Cross-Border Tour in Yunnan, Myanmar, Laos and Vietnam (II)

From Zhangfeng, Yunnan to Kachin, Myanmar



se for a quick visit, and go back to Ruili, before going on to Bhamo via Zhangfeng in Longchuan County.

No Borders for Temples or Schools

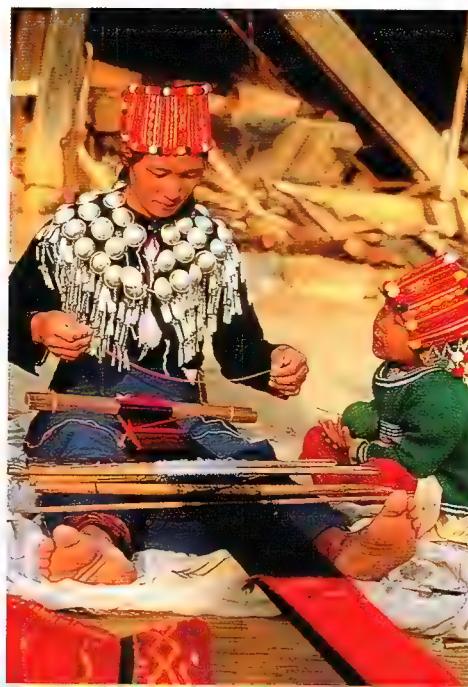
Climbing over the south Jingli Mountain we entered Longchuan, a county situated on the largest plain in Yunnan. The county had recently moved its seat of government to Zhangfeng, 33 kilometres from Ruili. Since it became a provincial-level border trading point, Zhangfeng, a previously tiny town, has changed

Bhamo, the second largest city of the State of Kachin, Myanmar, is 108 kilometres from Namhkam and can be reached by following the Sino-Indian Highway built during World War II. But we decided to first travel eastward 30 kilometres back to Mu-

beyond recognition due to the booming border trade over the last dozen years. In the town centre, three major commercial streets branch off a square where sculptures of three giant white elephants sit around a 12-metre-high Buddhist pagoda. This trio of elephants is a symbol of Zhangfeng, whose name means "Where the Giant Elephant Roars" in the Dai language.

We completed all the formalities at the Longchuan International Travel Service and headed for Laying, a crossing point on the China-Myanmar boundary.

Laying, situated four kilometres to the west of Zhangfeng, is a Dai village inhabited by both Chinese and Burmese. Had it not been for the boundary sign at one end of the village and the



1. This river, called Daying River in China and Peace River in Myanmar, is one of the major upper-reach branches of the Irrawaddy River. (by Liu Jianming)
2. Around the national border tablet at Laying there is a tiny rural fair.
3. The Jingpos in Dehong, Yunnan, and the Kachins in Myanmar are from the same origin. (by Chen Keqin)
4. The temple at Foreigners Street
5. Without reading the signboard, nobody would believe this is the border checking point at Laying.
6. A group of seniors from Zhangfeng, Yunnan, on their way to a temple in Myanmar



barely furnished room that served as a frontier check post, nobody would have realised that the village itself is a gateway to China.

When I looked around, I found that the giant banyan tree growing beside the boundary signpost looked more like a gateway. In the shadow of the tree was a tiny fair, where border residents from both countries were doing business and meeting friends and relatives. Although the dividing line between China and Myanmar was far from clear,

one could find the Chinese side by following the noise of the Dai-style dice games played in a row of canvas tents. The host suspends three large dice, each of which were painted with pictures of animals on their six sides. The punter stakes money on a chosen animal and then pulls a rope to let one of the dice roll down on to the table. As the money involved is in minute amounts, and the punters are more interested in the fun of it, everyone is in good humour.

Laying is a Dai village inhabited by Chinese and Burmese. If not for the border sign at one end of the village and the barely furnished room that serving as a frontier check post, nobody would know this is a gateway to China.

The Door-closing Festival had just finished, and it is the custom of the Dai people to pay weekly courtesy visits to local temples. Buddhist worship knows no national boundary.







Before long a group of children, with school-bags slung over their shoulders, emerged from the Burmese side. They were students from Myanmar going to study in China. Since the Chinese primary schools charge no tuition fees, the parents happily send their children there.

The Foreigners Street

Because few foreigners visit Laying compared to Ruili, we became rather conspicuous, and the local Customs officers seemed stricter. The Burmese officers were also very careful in granting us permission to enter their country. My first

impression was that this part of Myanmar actually looked only slightly different from Ruili.

The settlement linked with Laying Village is called Foreigners Street, a name that has found its way onto the map. Originally known as Leiji, it is mainly inhabited by a Han Chinese community. Is that why its name has been changed? I could not get an answer. The street was lined on both sides with houses with a wooden framework and tile-covered roof, and their facades were graced with latticed windows and finely crafted carvings.

I raised my camera to take some photos, but before I could click the shutter my arm was restrained. It was a Burmese policeman who had obviously been following me. This incident reminded me that I was in Myanmar, a country that had just adopted its policy of opening up. I immediately lowered my camera and apologised.

Bhamo: A Mixture of People and Trade

The 90-kilometre-long highway from Laying to Bhamo first threads its way through a mountain covered with bamboo and

1. Panning for gold on the Irrawaddy River (by Liu Jianming)
2. The Temple of Guan Yu (an ancient Chinese warrior) in Bhamo (by Liu Jianming)
3. Living by the Irrawaddy River (by Liu Jianming)
4. Elephants remain an important means of transportation in Bhamo. (by Liu Jianming)





bushes and then stretches into a vast expanse of flatland along a corridor of shaddock and willow trees. It took us almost half a day to reach Bhamo.

Bhamo, a major town involved in China-Myanmar trade, is a big city, second only to Myitkyina, the state capital. Situated near the confluence of the Irrawaddy and Daying rivers, Bhamo is also the northern terminal of the waterway along the Irrawaddy River. The local Chinese customarily call Bhamo "The New Street", for it did not appear

until the 1840s. The city is surrounded by many places whose names are recorded in Chinese history books for their close association with the celebrated Southwest Silk Road.

Near Bhamo is a tiny town which the local people call "Old Street", and which Chinese history books call Laoguantun. The city that is separated from Bhamo

across the river was known as Jiangtou City during the Ming and Qing dynasties. However, the tablet was damaged by the Japanese during World War II. In ancient times, the relationship between Chinese and Burmese rulers included both friendly exchanges and hostility. The local Nanzhao

Kingdom of the Tang Dynasty (618-907) had attacked Myanmar, and the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368) had launched a western expedition against it. All this, however, did little to sabotage the fraternity between the local people of both countries.

Kachin is the northernmost state of Myanmar. It is linked with Yunnan and

Tibet in the east and bordered by India on the west. Bhamo is a centre for exchange between China, Myanmar and India. Apart from Shans, Burmese and Kachins, Bhamo's population of 30,000 also includes quite a few Chinese and Indians. The streets of Bhamo are asphalt-surfaced and look clean and orderly, and the dwellings are mostly wooden structures with tin covered roofs. In the contrast to traditional Burmese temples there are also quite a few modern buildings of reinforced concrete, and beautiful churches, which are obviously vestiges of British colonial rule.

The picturesque Irrawaddy is the longest river in Myanmar





and the cradle of Burmese civilisation. Irrawaddy is the name of the Burmese God of Rain. The river arises in Tibet, and the Daying and Ruili rivers flowing through Dehong Prefecture of Yunnan also empty themselves into the Irrawaddy. The tributaries in the upper reaches of the Irrawaddy River abound in gold ore. People panning for gold may be seen in the river close to Bhamo.

The Chinatown of Bhamo is close to the port on the Irrawaddy. The Chinese living there dress and speak the same as the local people, but many seniors also speak fluent Chinese. However, bilingual signboards are a rarity in the streets, and members of the younger Chinese generation no longer speak the language.

The Kachin people, who comprise the majority of the local population, are actually of the same ethnic background as the Jingpo people in the Dehong Dai and Jingpo Autonomous Prefecture in Yunnan. Due to the influence of the Shan people,



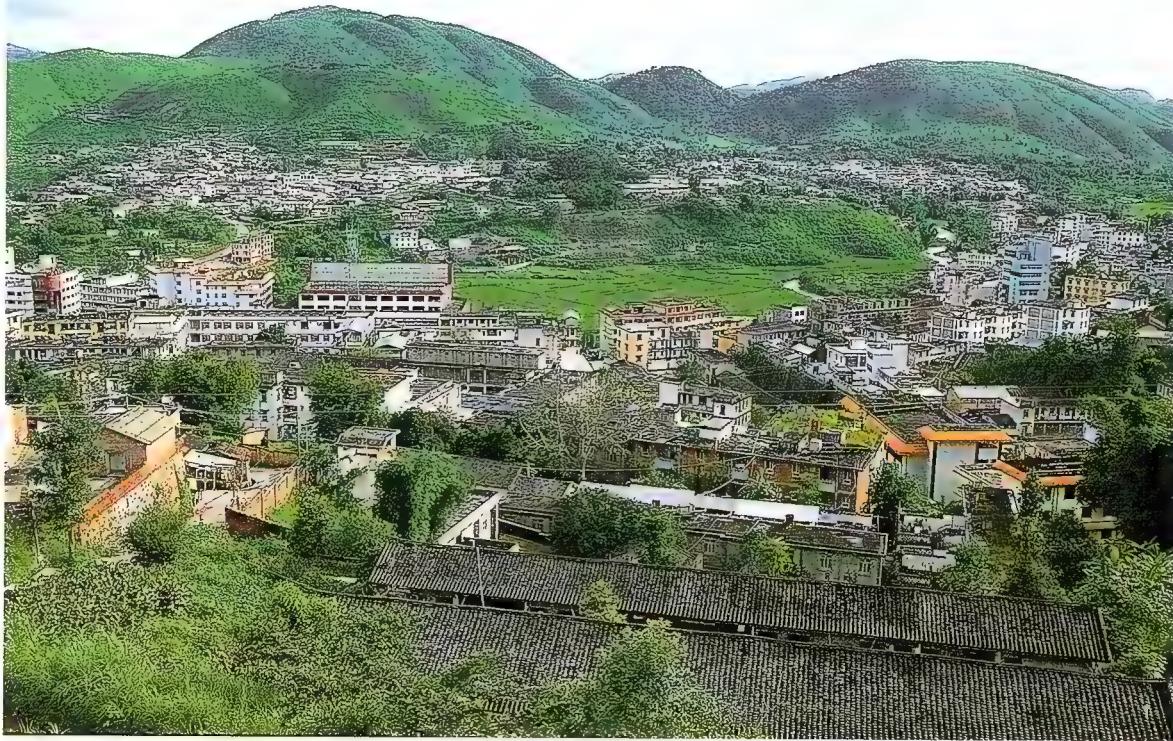
the Kachin men are attired in the Shan fashion, but the women wear more or less the same clothes as the Jingpo people. The Kachin people celebrate the Munao Festival in their villages for as long as eight days every year, and this culminates in a grand celebration in Myitkyina.

This is akin to the Munao Zongge Festival observed among the Jingpo people of Dehong.

Bhamo is also a tempting place to buy jade, for Kachin is a land of Burmese jade. Mogaung, about 200 kilometres from Bhamo, produces the world's best jadeite. ☉

1. A church at Bhamo, reminder of the previously British rule (by Liu Jianming)
2. Many residents of the State of Kachin have Indian blood.
3. Many people come to the Irrawaddy River to try their luck in finding gold. (by Liu Jianming)
4. A seafood market in Bhamo (by Liu Jianming)
5. Pottery wares are popular tourist souvenirs in Bhamo. (by Liu Jianming)





Cross-Border Tour in Yunnan, Myanmar, Laos and Vietnam(III)

Wanding and Jiugu – Sister Towns on the China-Myanmar Border

From Longchuan along the No. 320 State Highway we drove for 30 minutes and then crossed the Ruili River Bridge to enter Wanding. It was part of the old Yunnan-Myanmar Highway that played a great role during World War II.

The Tiny But Famous Wanding

Wanding is the smallest border town in China with a population of less than 20,000, of which only 5,000 are urban residents. Not as flourishing as Ruili now, it used to be the entrance of the Yunnan-Myanmar Highway during World War II and the only land port for international communications.

Wanding is small but pretty. Its streets are neat and clean. The only main street extends along the border, the Wanding River (a tributary of Ruili River), and is lined with the Border Trade Building, Customs Building and many big and small shops. At its eastern end lies the Wanding-Jiugu

Bridge, the "State Gate".

This uniquely-shaped enforced-cement bridge replaced a steel bridge built in 1938. It was the main channel for international military supplies during World War II. Every day thousands of trucks passed this bridge and hundred of thousands of Chinese expedition troops crossed the river from here to fight the Japanese in Myanmar and Laos. Today, this

bridge of former great merit looks very quiet.

The bridge opens at eight in the morning, and border villagers cross it freely. They only need to show their border ID cards and pay a few dozen cents. Some cross to visit relatives while others do business. Quite a few are tourists who visit Jiugu for half day or start a tour to Mu-se or Namhkam from here.

Wanding literally means "the place with the sun overhead" in Dai language. The Burmese police at the other end were very polite but serious. It seems that in these small places, everyone knows each other, so it was no surprise to see our Chinese and Burmese guides act like sisters.

Jiugu, a Burmese name, is called Banshi in the local Shan language, which means "sandy beach". A town under Mu-se County of the State of Shan, it is actually formed by two natural villages, Beancurd Village and Sand Village, one kilometre apart.





Like One Family Across the Border

After arriving at the Sand Village, while we were having lunch, two local girls came up to chat with us in Chinese. They were guides on probation and, like our guide, were also Burmese Chinese of Shan ethnic origin. From them I learned about their families and the rise and fall of Jiugu.

Their ancestors were actually the pioneers of Jiugu Town, which, like Wanding, was founded in the 1930s. During World War II, both towns served as strongholds of communications for international military supplies, thus being known far and wide in the world. In early 1950s, Jiugu was destroyed in Myanmar's battles with the remnants of the Kuomintang army. Most of the residents moved to Wanding, and even the market of Jiugu moved as well. In 1958, Jiugu was rebuilt and many of its former residents returned. This explains the close relationships between the peoples of the two towns.

The three girls chatted in Burmese and talked to me in

1. Wanding and Jiugu, separated by a winding small river
2. The statue of Sakyamuni worshipped in a temple in Jiugu.
3. Playing the game *latuotuo* outside a restaurant at the border
4. A pair of Dai youngsters having a good time
5. Residents of this area can cross the border river freely.





fluent Chinese. They told me that they learned Chinese at home and had also received bilingual education at school. One of them had even studied in Kunming, her hometown.

There was a temple of the Goddess of Mercy beside the girls' school. It belonged to the Han Buddhism of northern China. From a stone tablet in the temple, I discovered the name of Lin Mingxian as one of the donors. He was the commander-in-chief of the No. 4 Special Garrison in eastern Shan State.

In Jiugu, the main tourist spots were Buddhist temples and pagodas of southern sect. We went to visit the famous Asdi Pagoda and a Buddhist temple. The scenes there were typical of other temples we had visited, but my interest arose when I saw the young monks there — some were attending a class given by a senior monk, others were playing electronic games. The overall atmosphere was humane and peaceful.

We came back to Wanding just before the border closed. The border police moved the visa desk away and went home.

Jiugu in Myanmar and Wanding in China, both established in the 1930s, played the same important role on the international military supply line during World War II.



Only one soldier remained in the sentry box, watching the bridge, which had suddenly become extremely quiet. ☺

Translated by M.Q.

1. In a hairdresser's shop in Jiugu
2. The Dingjiu Bridge which marks the border between China and Myanmar at Wanding
3. A peddler in Jiugu in traditional Shan costume
4. Like the Dais in Yunnan, the Shan boys also have to enter a temple to become a monk at tender age.
5. Playing electronic games — a monk enjoying a break from his study







Cross-Border Tour in Yunnan, Myanmar, Laos and Vietnam (IV)

From Xishuangbanna, Yunnan to Mengla, Myanmar

Xishuangbanna has long been a representative tourist area of Yunnan. So there is the saying that "one who has not visited Xishuangbanna cannot be considered as having visited Yunnan". On this beautiful and fertile land, there are vast expanses of rain forests, evergreen bamboo groves and various colourful tropical and sub-tropical scenes. The different cultures and customs of the 13 ethnic groups here add to the strong attractions for visitors.

Jinghong, a Newly Emerged Tourist City

Jinghong City, capital of the Xishuangbanna Dai Autonomous Prefecture which borders both Myanmar and Laos, used to be a small town with country flavour under the name of Yunjinghong. Now it has become a tourist city with star-rated hotels, restaurants, night-clubs, and sauna houses lining the streets. On my last visit, I could easily walk to the countryside nearby to enjoy the rural scene. Now all the farmland has been swallowed up by the city. The famous Manjinglan Village to the east of the city has become a food street with Dai restaurants

and bamboo hotels doing brisk business.

Walking down along Lancang River, I saw China's Jinghong Port on the eastern side. From this international port one can sail to the lower reaches of the Mekong River to reach the famous Golden Triangle at the junction of the three countries — Laos, Myanmar and Thailand. The poetic scenes of Dai women bathing in the river which could be easily found in the past, now have disappeared. In Mandou Village on the eastern bank, the Dai villagers entertain visitors in their bamboo houses with dances and demonstrations of traditional

customs, such as weaving, pottery-making and cock-fighting. On the banks of Nanha River southwest of the city, a folk culture park has been built to display the customs of the Dai, Hani, Lahu, Blang, Jino and Yao ethnic groups.

Wild Elephant Valley

Among the new tourist spots in Xishuangbanna, the most fascinating is the Wild Elephant Valley Forest Park.

According to scientific research, there are only 500 wild Asian elephants living in the basin





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of Lancang River (in China) and Mekong River (in Myanmar and Laos), and of these 300 live in Xishuangbanna in a nature reserve between Mengyang near Jinghong City and Mengla County. The wild elephants mainly inhabit small river valleys below 1,300 metres above sea level, with banana, bamboo and wild fruits as their principal diet.

The Sancha River Valley is a prime region where many wild elephants congregate. In the Wild Elephant Valley Forest Park, a 2,063-metre-long cable-car track has been installed. Visitors can take the cable car to the suspended elephant-viewing corridor,

the elephant-viewing platform and the tree hotel. Here the elephants may be seen coming out of the forest in groups to bathe in the small river, playing or foraging for food. Amazingly, these animals are not afraid of people. Sometimes they even walk on the highway — seemingly during an inspection tour — and very often block the way. In such a case, of course, no-one complains about the delay — they instead rejoice in their good luck.

In the Mengyang Nature Reserve at sunset we saw an elephant walking on the mountain and disappear suddenly in the dim light.

The Wild

Elephant Valley is 48 kilometres from Jinghong City, about a one-hour drive. Before going to Mengyang, our tour group first visited the Dai villages at Ganlanba, and then the tropical botanical garden on the Hulu (Gourd) Island in Menglun.

1. The Xishuangbanna General Temple (by Liu Jianming)
2. Tourists lighting a Kong Ming Lantern at the Daluo Forest Park
3. Colourful Dai dresses on sale
4. In the living room of a Dai farmer's house in Ganlanba
5. A village of the Dai people



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Cross-Border Tour in Yunnan, Myanmar, Laos and Vietnam(IV): From Xishuangbanna, Yunnan to Mengla, Myanmar

Afterwards, we crossed Mount Jino where the Jino ethnic minority people live. After a day's tour along the eastern route in the prefecture, we entered the Mengyang Nature Reserve at dusk. At the edge of the sparse forest on both sides of the highway a few people who were catching butterflies suddenly waved at us to stop and pointed to the mountain. It was an elephant walking on the slope in graceful strides! We jumped out of the car to take photos but it was too dark, and soon the elephant disappeared.

We stayed overnight in a villa at the Wild Elephant Valley. The next morning we anxiously hurried to the suspended elephant-viewing corridor. Only then did we realise how fortunate it would have been to lodge in the tree hotel the previous night. Three elephants — a male, a female and a baby — visited the area that night, playing for three hours in the water of the small river beneath the tree hotel. All we could see was their big footprints on the riverbank.

Still, we had seen one elephant, so we felt our luck was not all bad. We then went to see the performances by the elephants in the Elephant Training School. Returning by the cable car, we enjoyed the chance to look down on the tropical rain forests, an unusual and wonderful experience.

A Turbulent History for Mengla

After returning to Jinghong, we immediately proceeded to Daluo Port in Menghai County. On the other side of the border in Myanmar is Mengla, capital of the No. 4 Special Zone, a very special administrative zone with local autonomy, in the eastern Shan Prefecture of Myanmar. To understand why, it is useful to look back at the political history of Myanmar.

During the British colonial rule a chieftain system was established within the Shan ethnic group and the Shan National State was founded. After World War II, Myanmar gained its independence from British

colonial rule. The government wanted to abolish the chieftain system, but met with great resistance from the chieftains. In 1962, the military government tried to forcibly abolish the chieftain system, but some chieftains' armies banded together to fight against it. Later, the area became a region of separatist forces, comprised of these chieftains' armies, remnants of Chinese Kuomintang National Army, the Burmese Communist armed forces and the drug dealers' armies, each ruling their own "state". The armies of these factions were supported by the sale of drug. Widespread cultivation of the poppy for opium production had occurred during British rule. The armed drug dealers farmed fields with the opium poppy in the no-man's-land at the borders of Myanmar, Laos and Thailand, an area known as the Golden Triangle. Eighty percent of the drug



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1. Though bridges have been built, many Dai people prefer to cross river this way to make a shortcut. (by Li Ping)
2. Receiving a massage from an elephant at the Elephant Training School in the Wild Elephant Valley
3. Riding over a rain forest to the central area of the Wild Elephant Valley
4. Roasted fish is a delicious Dai dish.
5. The Kemu people in Jinghong and Mengla in Xishuangbanna have not yet been identified as an ethnic group. The Kamus in Laos are believed to be of the same origin.







produced in this area was from Myanmar. The proliferation of the opium poppy has been blamed for the serious drug problem across the globe. This forced the Myanmar government to launch a prolonged "war against opium". With international

support, the government fought for 20 years to wipe out all the faction groups, disarming many and forcing others to surrender. These former faction-controlled areas then became new autonomous regions under the central government. The No. 4 Special Zone was originally the August 15th Military Zone of the Burmese Communist Party.

Knowing the history of this region, we thus proceeded into Mengla with some feelings of mystery and apprehension.

Entering the No. 4 Special Zone

Crossing the border at the No. 218 border mark at Daluo, we entered Myanmar. Gradually the friendliness and politeness of the people in this Special Zone put us all at ease. The signboard at the border checkpoint proclaimed in both Chinese and Burmese: the No. 4

On the top of a hill not far beyond the checkpoint stood a glittering Buddhist pagoda — the Myanmar-China Friendship Pagoda.

Special Zone of the State of Shan. Looking over the board, we saw a glittering Buddhist pagoda on the top of a hill — the Myanmar-China Friendship Pagoda.

The whole procedure of crossing the border was very simple and we even did not have to leave our car. The unusually simple formalities may be Myanmar's opening-up policy to attract more tourists and businessmen.

The streets in downtown Mengla were clean and neat, and lined with buildings in Burmese and Western architectural styles. Shops were larger than those in other border towns, possibly as a result of the status of this Special Zone. Reforms were being made here and the economy was coming to life.

With the help of the Chinese local government, the No. 4 Special Zone had become self-sufficient in grain and had reduced its dependence on the opium poppy. Every day, thousands of tourists and businessmen come into Myanmar from China. The development of tourism and border trade has thus raised the local people's income.

Our guide knew the folks at the local tourist bureau well, so each time she would pay a visit there. We were surprised that the official was a Chinese man who was assigned to Yunnan to receive re-education during the "cultural revolution". It was a clever strategy of the Myanmar local government to assign a man like him to this post because the majority of tourists to this area are Chinese. A Burmese-Chinese woman who had studied in Yunnan became our guide. She spoke Aini language at home

1. The magnificent Myanmar-China Friendship Pagoda (by Liu Jianming)
2. The spacious hall in the pagoda where the statue of Sakyamuni is worshipped
3. The border checkpoint on the Myanmar side opposite Daluo of China
- 4&5. The Aini people in the State of Shan, Myanmar (by Liu Jianming)
6. The border checkpoint at Mengla, Myanmar





but conversed in fluent Chinese with us. Mengla has 13 different ethnic groups, including the Aini, Dai, Blang, Burmese and Guogan, but the common language is Aini.

Transvestites, Casinos and Tourism

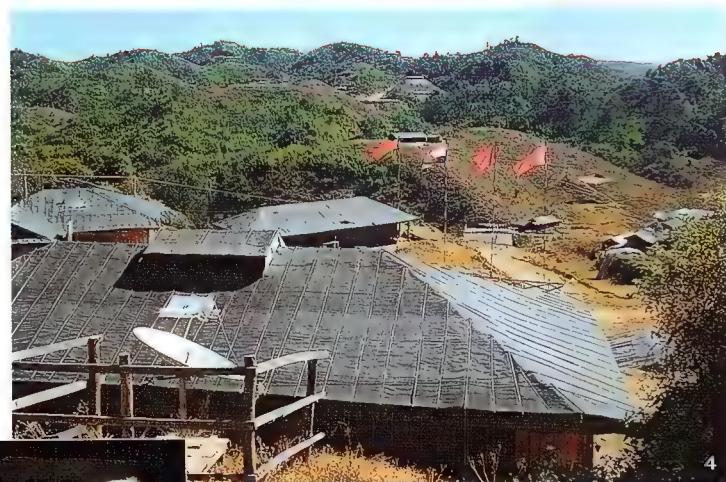
The office of the tourist bureau was inside the Sleeping Buddha Park in Mengla, so we took the opportunity to view this giant Buddha lying peacefully at the foot of a mountain. Then we proceeded to the Myanmar-China Friendship Pagoda, where we came to understand that its symbolic importance

was much greater than its religious significance. In the golden Buddhist pagoda there is a circular hall housing a coloured sculpture and the marble statue of Sakyamuni. The statue is a gift from the central government of Myanmar, but the coloured sculpture looks more like the work of Chinese artisans. Walking via a staircase to the veranda, we could see the border gate, buildings in the downtown area, the round and pointed roofs of the typical Burmese-style buildings, and green fields and mountains. Our guide pointed out a large round building in the distance — the recreation centre named

Golden Triangle, which attracted tourists with casinos and transvestite performances.

Under the Friendship Pagoda is the Drug Elimination Exhibition Hall where objects and pictures are displayed to show the source of the drugs, their harm to people and the achievements that Myanmar has made to eliminate drugs over the past years. With joint effort, while continuing their battle against drug traffic in this area, the governments of China and Myanmar also work painstakingly to encourage local farmers to cultivate other economically viable crops in this region. A sugar refinery has been set up in Mengla by a Chinese company as a form of trade





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compensation. This, hopefully, will help farmers shift from poppy to sugarcane cultivation.

After visiting the exhibition, we decided to go to the Golden Square, rather than the Golden Triangle, to watch the performances by the transvestites and the elephants. The entertainment business in Mengla was indeed booming. The Golden Square is about the same

size as the Golden Triangle, and most of our group felt that the transvestites' performances were better than the ones in Namhkam. After the shows, these fairy-like beauties had their photos taken with the tourists. They even went so far as to expose their chests to show off their "womanly" bodies, something which the famous Thai transvestites never would do.

There are many places of interest in Mengla such as the Peace Pagoda, Jingdong Temple, Manlong Temple and White Dragon Pagoda. Other options include a 98-kilometre drive to Chai-In-Tung or a trip to the main town

of Takhile at the Myanmar-Thailand border to get even closer to the Golden Triangle.

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Translated by M.Q.

1. A bird's-eye view of Mengla from the golden pagoda
2. A performance given by transvestites at the Golden Square
3. The statue of the Sleeping Buddha lying at the foot of a green hill
4. The headquarters of the United Army in the No. 4 Special Zone of the State of Shan (by Liu Jianming)
5. Opium exhibited at the Drug Elimination Exhibition Hall (by Liu Jianming)
6. Soldiers of the United Army (by Liu Jianming)





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Cross-Border Tour in Yunnan, Myanmar, Laos and Vietnam(V)

From Mengla, Yunnan to Luang Prabang, Laos



Mengla County, in the southeastern part of the Xishuangbanna Prefecture, protrudes like a wedge into Myanmar and Laos and thus is called a "land peninsula". It is considered a natural international thoroughfare for the countries of the Indochinese Peninsula.

Mekong River: Through Green and Gold

Getting on board a ship at Jinghong and going downstream 81 kilometres, we reached the Guanlei Port in Mengla County, the first river entry point into China from the Indochinese Peninsula. Not far from the Guanlei Port, the Lancang River meets the Nannao River and flows into Laos and Myanmar, becoming the Mekong. This area around the common boundary of China, Laos and Myanmar is known as the Green Triangle. The Mekong River first serves as the boundary river between Laos and Myanmar. Further downstream, from Mong

Ton in Myanmar and Ban Dong in Laos to Chiang Saen in Thailand, at the common boundary of all three countries, is the notorious Golden Triangle. Now, setting off from the Chinese border, people can make a 300-kilometre boat tour along the Mekong to enjoy the beautiful landscape as well as the rich and unique customs of the various ethnic peoples.

Muong Xay Advertises its Beer

Our group entered Laos through Mohan and after a two-hour bus journey, we arrived at Muang Xay, capital of Oudomxay Province. Located at the junction of the No.1 and No. 4 highways (both built with Chinese aid), Muang Xay is now a pivot of transport and communications in northern Laos. Thus, it has become one of the towns achieving the quickest development in recent years. Its market appears quite prosperous and its people have developed a sense of the commodity economy. A large advertisement billboard, the first of its kind in history, has been put up in the downtown area to promote the domestically-produced "Tiger" beer.

Most of the Chinese tourists here come in groups, while most of the Westerners travel as individuals and go to Luang Prabang.

There are 68 ethnic groups in Laos, with





group, the "Ailao" who migrated southward long ago. Nevertheless, perhaps due to geographical seclusion, these ethnic groups in Laos appear more primitive in their traditions than their counterparts in China.

Luang Prabang, a Famous Ancient City

We continued south by bus to Pak Beng, from where we sailed along the Muong River to the Mekong. After a six-hour journey downstream, we arrived at Luang Prabang.

Luang Prabang is a famous city with a history of over 1,000 years. Once it served as the capital of the ancient Kingdom of Lan Cang, the most powerful kingdom in Myanmar history. It is also the birthplace of the Hinayana Buddhism. For this, it is also known as the Buddhist Capital, which is exactly what its name means in Burmese. As such,

many sharing origins with Chinese groups. For example, the Laotians, the largest group in the country, share the same culture and customs with the Dais in China. It is said the very word "Lao" was derived from the name of an ancient Chinese ethnic

the places of interest for tourists in the city are of course the gorgeous relics of the royal families as well as Buddhist shrines and pagodas. Occupying an area of six hectares, the Luang Prabang Palace is divided into three architectural groups. In the centre is the main hall shaped like a pagoda; it was used for grand ceremonies. At its rear are three separate buildings of the palace where the king lived and worked. The buildings look resplendent and magnificent, their furnishings elegant and flamboyant, and most of the furniture was made of sandal and Pheobe nanmu wood.

In the city, there are numerous Buddhist sites, including pagodas and over 50 large temples.

Not far from the Guanlei Port, the Lancang River meets the Nannao River and enters Laos and Myanmar to become the Mekong. The area around the China-Laos-Myanmar border is known as the Green Triangle.

The handicrafts of Luang Prabang enjoy great fame, and many place names are derived from their handicraft industries. The handicraft articles are on offer at very reasonable prices, so, despite the fatigue of the long trip and the overloaded luggage, we all submitted to the temptation to buy some. ☐

Translated by Li Zhenguo

1. A peaceful village in the morning mist (by Shi Bing)
2. The Mohan checkpoint on the border between China and Laos (by Liu Jianming)
3. The splendid ancient Luang Prabang Palace (by Shi Bing)
4. On the road to Luang Prabang (by Shi Bing)
5. Buses like these are the main means of transportation in Luang Prabang. (by Liu Jianming)
6. Picture boards in a Muang Xay street: one political, one commercial (by Liu Jianming)





Cross-Border Tour in Yunnan, Myanmar, Laos and Vietnam (VI)

From Hekou, Yunnan to Lao Cai, Vietnam

From Kunming we travelled along the "metre-wide railway" running through the valleys and peaks of the red earth plateau for 24 hours to the border town of Hekou, the seat of the Hekou Yao Autonomous County. It is an important market for border trade between China and Vietnam.

Wandering About in the 'Vietnam Street'

The first impression we had of Hekou was the unbearable heat, which formed a sharp contrast with the coolness in the "Spring City" Kunming. At only 70 metres above sea level, the region around Hekou is at the lowest altitude in Yunnan, thus explaining its high temperature.

Hekou is a small town with only one major street, lined on both sides by small shops and restaurants, near the railway station. The local people called it the Vietnam Street because many of the bosses of the small shops are Vietnamese from the

Lao Cai Province just across the border. Some of them even come from as far away as Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City.

The border trade market, in two buildings resembling department stores, offers more than 200 booths selling a whole range of goods, from handicraft articles carved of ox horns, smuggled cosmetics, American cigarettes and Japanese gourmet spices to agricultural produce from Vietnam, as well as light industrial goods produced in China.

The Metre-wide Railway

The Silian Hill is the highest point in the Hekou County seat. Looking south from its top, we had a clear view across the river to Lao Cao (Liugu), the capital of the Lao Cai Province in Vietnam.

At the end of the Vietnam Street is the Nanxi River, which is about 50 metres wide and across it is Vietnamese territory. Here, the Nanxi River pours into the Honghe River and billows into Vietnam. Hekou (River Mouth) got its name precisely from the confluence of the Honghe and Nanxi rivers. Standing by the

river, we could clearly see Vietnam's national flag flying in the wind on the other side. Over the river is a triple-purpose — railway, highway and pedestrian — bridge. This "metre-wide railway" runs across the bridge into the hinterland of Vietnam. This is the only railway in China that uses the same narrow





gauge as the railways in Vietnam. The boundary line between the two countries runs through the middle point of the bridge, and customs buildings at both ends of it serve as gateways to each country.

This Yunnan-Vietnam Railway is

quite famous in modern history, being built by the French in 1910 at the end of the Qing Dynasty of China. It totalled 855 kilometres in length, running directly from Kunming to Lao Cai, Hanoi and Hai Phong in Vietnam via Yiliang, Kaiyuan and Hekou in China. Of the total length, 466 kilometres were in Yunnan Province, which is now known as the Kunming-Hekou Railway. When the railway construction was completed, the railways running east from Kunming to Guizhou and Sichuan provinces were not yet built. Hence, the saying that "there are 18 strange phenomena in Yunnan, and one of them is that Yunnan is connected with a foreign country by railway but not with domestic cities".

Rafting Down the Boundary Nanxi River

Apart from the wonderful scenery along the border, the most exciting activity for tourists now is white water rafting down the Nanxi River. Many places in China are attracting tourists with rafting programs, providing thrilling experiences. In addition, the program here is unique because the route follows a boundary river between two countries.

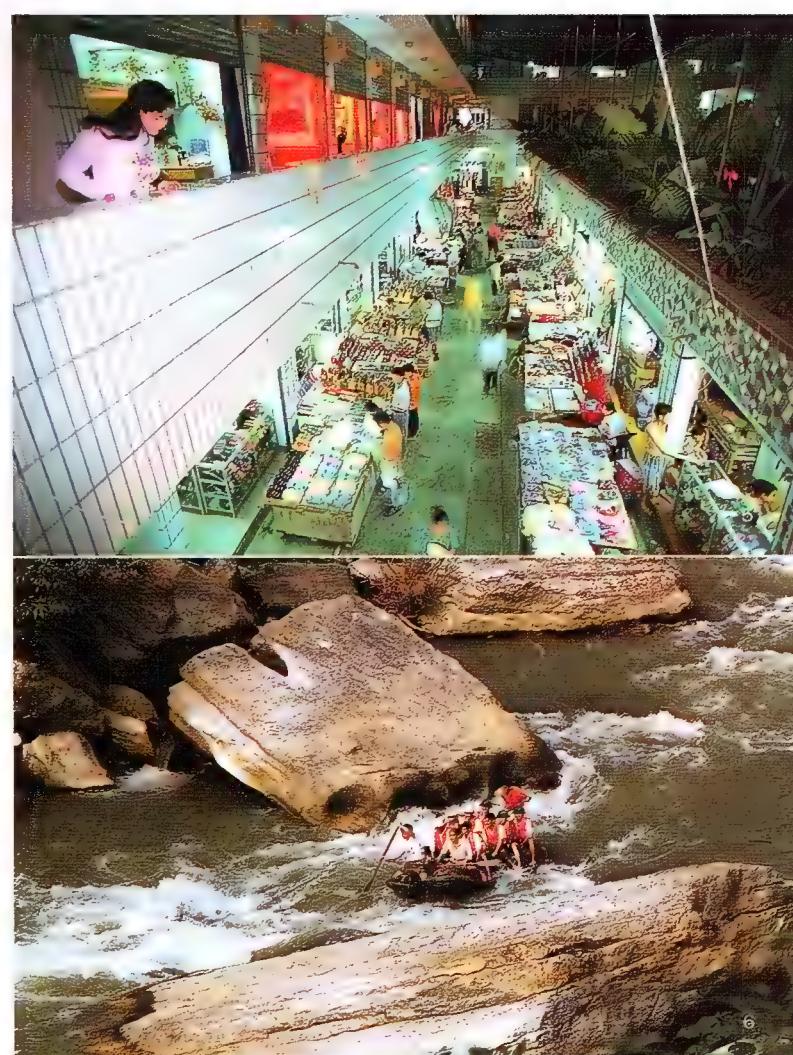
We took a bus from Hekou to Niulang Tan (Cowboy Shoal), the starting point on the upper reaches of the river, and got on a rubber raft with two guides. Almost immediately the raft shot like an arrow down the river with the current. The water in the first dozen kilometres of the 32-kilometre route was very swift with 42 raging rapids and six rugged shoals. On both sides of the river were precipitous peaks and thick primitive forests. When running past a particularly turbulent rapid, the raft jumped and bumped like a wild horse as the waves surged, soaking everyone on the raft. Despite this we were all quite happy and excited. The last eight kilometres along the border were comparatively quiet so we could enjoy the unique scenes of people and "landscape paintings".

Lao Cai Temple Honours Chinese General

We decided not to miss the opportunity to go cross the border for a half-day tour to Lao Cai.

The Sino-Vietnamese bridge is always crowded with people, mostly Chinese and Vietnamese living near the border. There are Chinese returning with native products from Vietnam as well as Vietnamese carrying goods on bicycles to sell in Hekou. There are also many tourist groups, and individual tourists from the West, because Hekou allows the entry and exit of people from third countries. Now and then, the bridge is closed to pedestrians when a train rumbles past. Passenger and freight trains pass through daily. International passenger trains between Kunming and the Vietnamese capital Hanoi cross weekly. Border formalities on both sides

1. Hekou and Lao Cai viewed from the top of the Lao Cai Hotel
2. The bridge on Nanxi, the border river between China and Vietnam, is for trains, cars and pedestrians.
3. Vietnamese dresses sold in a Hekou shop
4. Hekou is the only border port in Yunnan that allows entry of visitors from a third country.
5. The second floor of the Border Trade Centre is for beauty shops and Karaoke.
6. A thrilling experience — rafting on the Nanxi River



DOANH NGHIỆP
LÂM





were business-like, much stricter than at the Myanmar and Laos borders.

During the Sino-Vietnamese war in the early 1980s, the whole town of Lao Cai was damaged and rebuilt on another site. In 1991, when relations between China and Vietnam were

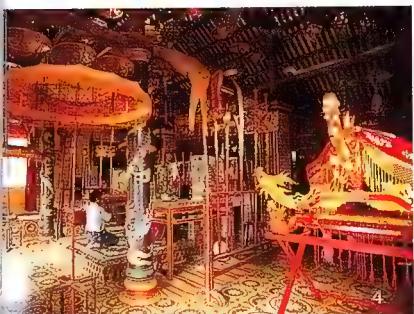
normalised, a flourishing border trade and tourism came to life again. A large market in the town centre with hundreds of booths rented to individual business owners offers a whole range of beautiful goods. But for tourists, the most sought items were the reasonably-priced ox horn carvings, wood carvings inlaid with shells, and alcoholic drinks brewed with rare medicinal plants from the mountains.

On our way back, near the customs house we saw a new, major tourist attraction in Lao Cai — a big temple in memory of Liu Yongfu, a Chinese general and hero who fought the French at the end of the Qing Dynasty. He did a great service to Vietnam when he led his Black Flag Army against the invaders and so won respect from the local people. Enshrined and worshipped in this renovated temple was not only the statue of General Liu but also statues of the Buddha, the Goddess of Mercy and Guan Yu, a famous Chinese general in the Three Kingdoms Period (220-280).



Translated by Li Zhenguo

1. It is popular among the Vietnamese to take a picture with the statue of Ho Chi Minh, the founding father of the republic.
2. Police on the Lao Cai street
3. Girls of Lao Cai
4. Inside the Temple of Liu Yongfu
5. A bird's-eye view of Lao Cai



Highlights of Border Tours in Yunnan

The more than 4,000-kilometre-long border between China's Yunnan and the neighbouring countries of Myanmar, Laos and Vietnam provides favourable conditions for border tours. Following are a few of the selected itineraries.

China-Myanmar Border Tours

Fly from Kunming to Luxi, capital of the Dehong Dai and Jingpo Autonomous Prefecture, and take a bus for 80 kilometres to reach either Ruili or Wanding on the border.

Itineraries:

One-day Tour A : Ruili —— Jiegao (cross border) —— Mu-se

One-day Tour B : Ruili —— Nongdao (cross border) —— Namhkam

Two-day Tour : Wanding (cross border) —— Jigu —— Mu-se —— Namhkam

Three-day Tour : Ruili —— Zhangfeng —— Laying (cross border) —— Bhamo

Seven-day Tour : Ruili —— Jiegao (cross border) —— Mu-se —— La Shio —— Mandlay

After a 50-minute flight from Kunming to Jinghong, capital of the Xishuangbanna Dai Autonomous Prefecture, take a bus, driving 134 kilometres to the west, to reach Daluo in Menghai County on the China-Myanmar border.

Itineraries:

One-day Tour: Daluo (cross border) —— Lesser Mengla

China-Laos Border Tours

Driving 193 kilometres towards the southeast from Jinghong, you reach Mengla County bordering Laos.

Itineraries:

One-day Tour A : Mengla —— Mohan (cross border) —— Phone Sali

One-day Tour B : Mengla —— Mohan (cross border) —— Namtha

Two-day Tour : Mengla —— Mohan (cross border) —— Namtha —— Muang Xay

Six-day Tour : Mengla —— Mohan (cross border) —— Luang Prabang

China-Vietnam Border Tours

Taking a train from Kunming and travelling for 24 hours, you reach the border city Hekou that overlooks Lao Cai of Vietnam on the other side of the river.

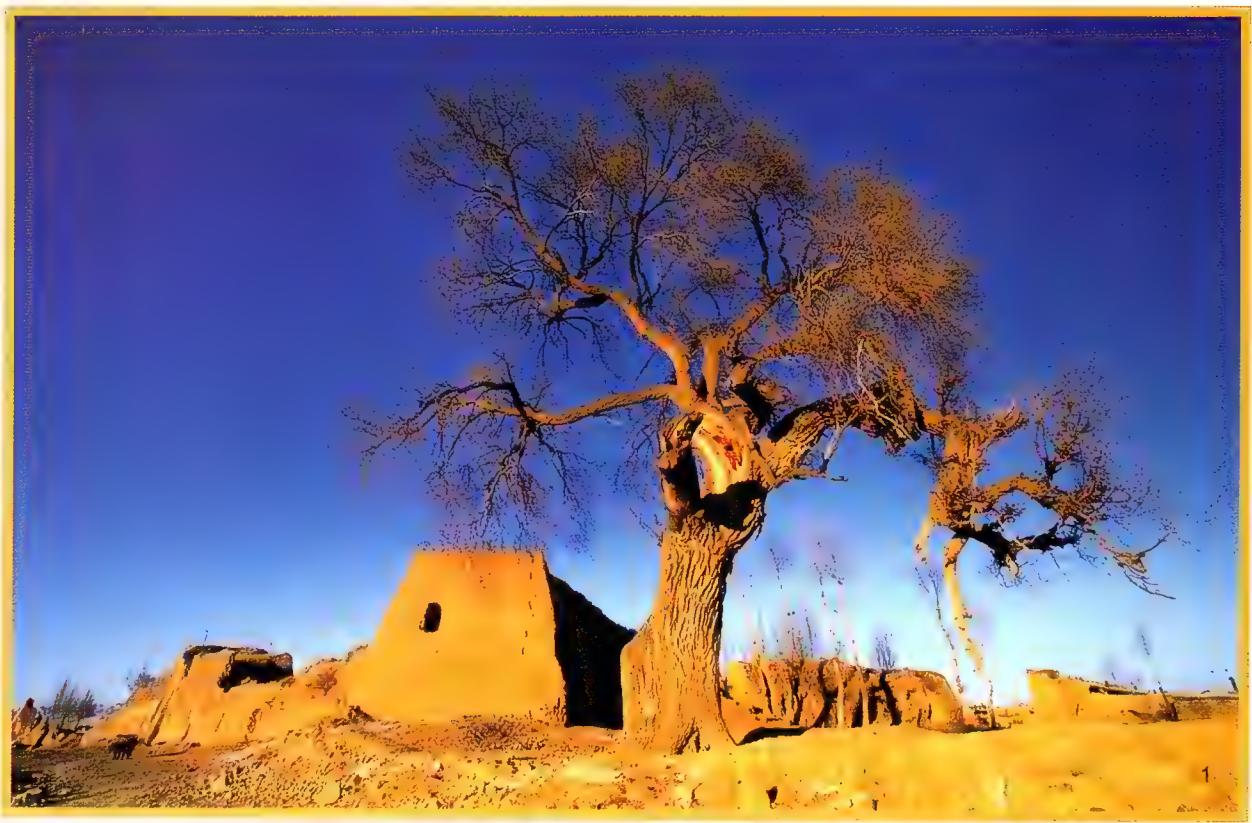
Itineraries:

One-day Tour : Hekou (cross border) —— Lao Cai

Two-day Tour A : Hekou (cross border) —— Sa Ba

Two-day Tour B : Hekou (cross border) —— Bao Thang (Pu Lou)

Once in Yunnan, Chinese citizens can join a cross-border tour group by showing their identity cards to a local travel service agency of grade three or higher. Tourists from a third country and Chinese from Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan have to get their visas for the corresponding country before going to visit Myanmar, Laos and Vietnam.



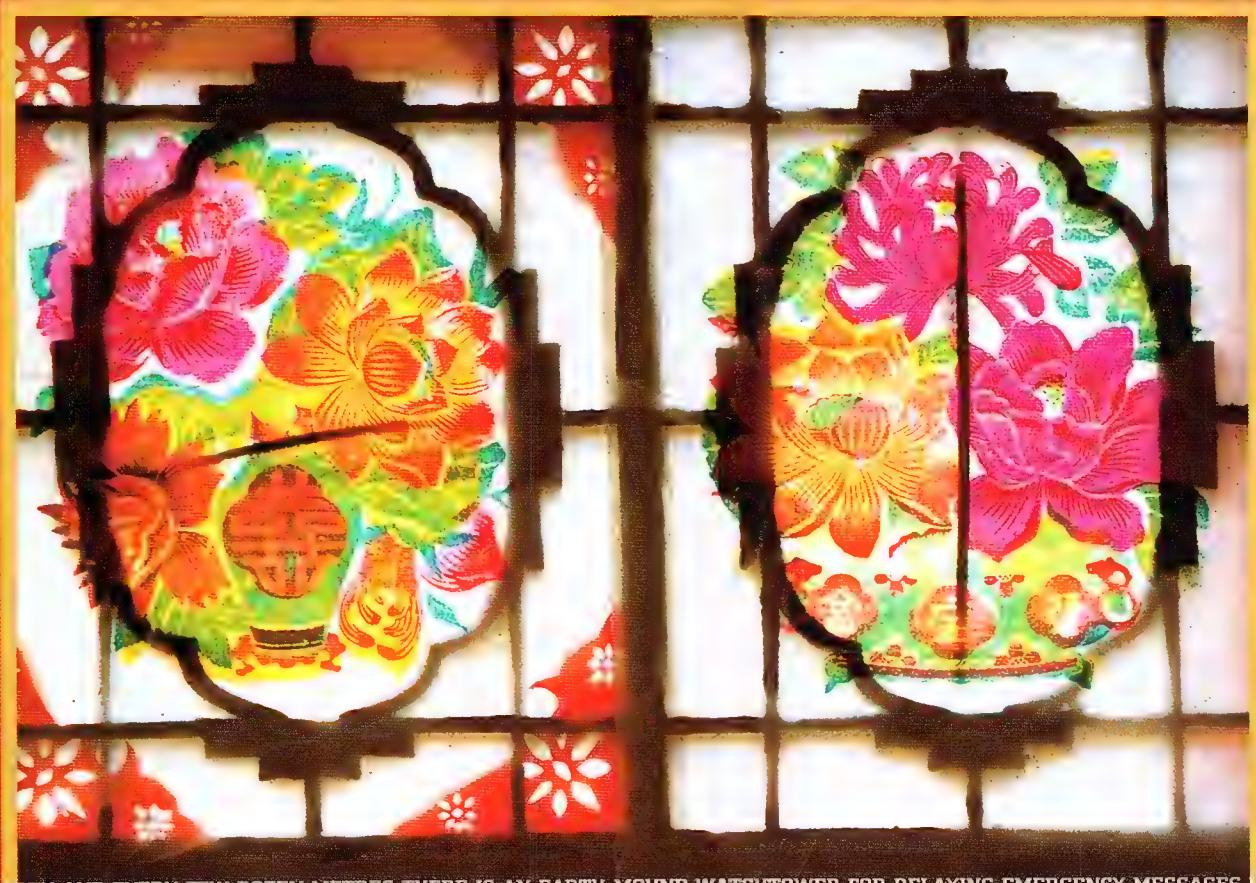
NEW YEAR AT A GREAT WALL VILLAGE

Photos & article by Li Youxiang

A snowfall and biting wind drastically lowered the temperature in the region north of the Great Wall. Despite the cold, I set out from Datong by squeezing onto a minibus for Zhenbianbu (Border Defence Village) on the eve of

the Spring Festival (Chinese New Year). Finding myself among people going home for the festival reunion, I engaged in conversations with passengers and the bus driver all the way, totally oblivious of the cold weather.





MIMED EARTH AND EVERY FEW DOZEN METRES THERE IS AN EARTH-MOUND WATCHTOWER FOR RELAYING EMERGENCY MESSAGES IN ANCIENT TIMES.



I got off at Zhenchuan and walked all by myself on the vast expanse of wilderness covered with snow.

All the different sections of the Great Wall I had seen before were built on top of mountains, in valleys, marshland or the desert, all places easy to defend and difficult to capture. But this section of the Great Wall stands in the open space between two north-south mountain chains. The wall is built with rammed earth and every few dozen metres there is an earth-mound watchtower for relaying emergency messages during wars in ancient times.

Just for Fresh Air

The village of Zhenbianbu, about five kilometres east of Zhenchuan, is enclosed by a wall with a circumference of one kilometre and a height of seven to eight metres. Today, after so many years of weathering, this former defence stronghold appears in poor condition. But to me, its present look had a special charm. It

looked attractive from all angles, with a mysterious appearance.

On a hill slope carpeted with snow, I came across a villager tending a herd of cows. I asked, "The snow is so thick and there's no grass for the animals, why do you still bring them out here?" The man smiled and replied, "The way to raise cows is not to keep them in the shed all day long. They need fresh air." He tossed a question back at me: "Why do you come out in such cold weather?" I answered, "Like your cows, I was tired of being confined in the city and came out for some fresh air!"

On the New Year's Eve

From the west gate on the wall a main road seven to eight metres wide extends straight to the east gate. Another major road going north-south crosses it in the middle, forming a pattern like a huge cross. Along the roads are many adobe houses — homes of over 200 families. In the village centre is an ancient stage built with wood dating back to the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644). With



FIRST THEY MIXED STEAMED MASHED POTATOES IN LOCALLY PRODUCED BUCKWHEAT FLOUR TO MAKE THE WRAPPINGS. THE FILLING WAS EITHER



money and labour contributed by the villagers, a new and much larger theatre has been completed in recent years.

The village head treated me to typical farmers' food and told me that in the past the village was poor and cut off from the outside world, but it had also produced some outstanding people, including the township head and even officials of the county government. Now easy transportation has allowed many young people to work away from the village. When the villagers talked about how foreigners had driven over to the village, bringing along their maps, there was genuine happiness on everybody's face. The village head said in a strong, proud voice: "Our village is part of the Great Wall cultural relics. If we develop the place into a tourist zone, we are sure to become prosperous!"





AT CHINESE VILLAGE. WHEN STEAMED ON STRONG FIRE, THE DUMPLINGS WERE ALMOST TRANSPARENT AND TASTED REALLY DELICIOUS

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Crystal Dumplings

While at Zhenbianbu Village, I stayed with Wang Cai and his family, a family of four generations of hospitable people.

What I enjoyed most were the dumplings Wang's family made. First they mixed steamed mashed potatoes with locally produced buckwheat flour to make the wrappings. The filling was either meat or vegetables. When the dumplings were steamed on a strong fire, they were almost transparent and tasted really delicious. For festivals or guests, the villagers would make such dumplings as treats. In cities, such a delicacy could only be found in expensive restaurants under a fancy name — Crystal Dumplings.

At noon on the 15th day of the first lunar month, Mrs. Wang, assisted by her 17-year-old daughter and two daughters-in-law, made crystal dumplings. Outside, Mr. Wang's 76-year-old mother,

together with her great grandson, fed the sheep and then joined in the making of dumplings. When they had almost finished, Mr. Wang's father, 81 years old, came home after a walk in the village.

Previous page: 1. This ancient tree is over 500 years old.
2. A well-preserved ancient castle ♦ 3. Remains of the Great Wall on the plain ♦ 4. Traditional colourful paper-cuts

1. Every family wants a picture on the New Year's Day.
2. At my welcoming dinner, prepared by the village head
3. The stage built during the Ming Dynasty
4. Wang Cai's mother and her great grandson



4



In the midst of conversations and laughter, the crystal dumplings, steaming hot, were brought to the dining table.

Reputation Is Most Important

Wang Cai, his parents and grandparents were all born and raised at Zhenbianbu. And even in his wildest dreams, never did Wang Cai expect to

All the women donned red cotton-padded coats and when several stood together they appeared like burning flames. I asked one woman why they wore these coats. She said, "We wore them on our wedding day. Every Spring Festival, we take them out of the trunk for they are warm, pretty and good for dancing."

On the evening of the 15th day, a bonfire was lit in the Village Square. Men and women, old and young, stood in a big ring, watching some adults doing the Yangge Dance and children lighting their lanterns. Fireworks were set off at midnight. The red lanterns, red spring couplets, red window paper-cuts and the red coats illuminated by the bonfire marked the climax of the festival celebration.

FROM THE CHINESE NEW YEAR'S DAY TO THE 15TH DAY OF THE SPRING FESTIVAL, ZHENBIANBU WAS IMMersed IN JUBILANT CELEBRATIONS. PEOPLE WORE RED COATS AND DANCED THE YANGGE DANCE.

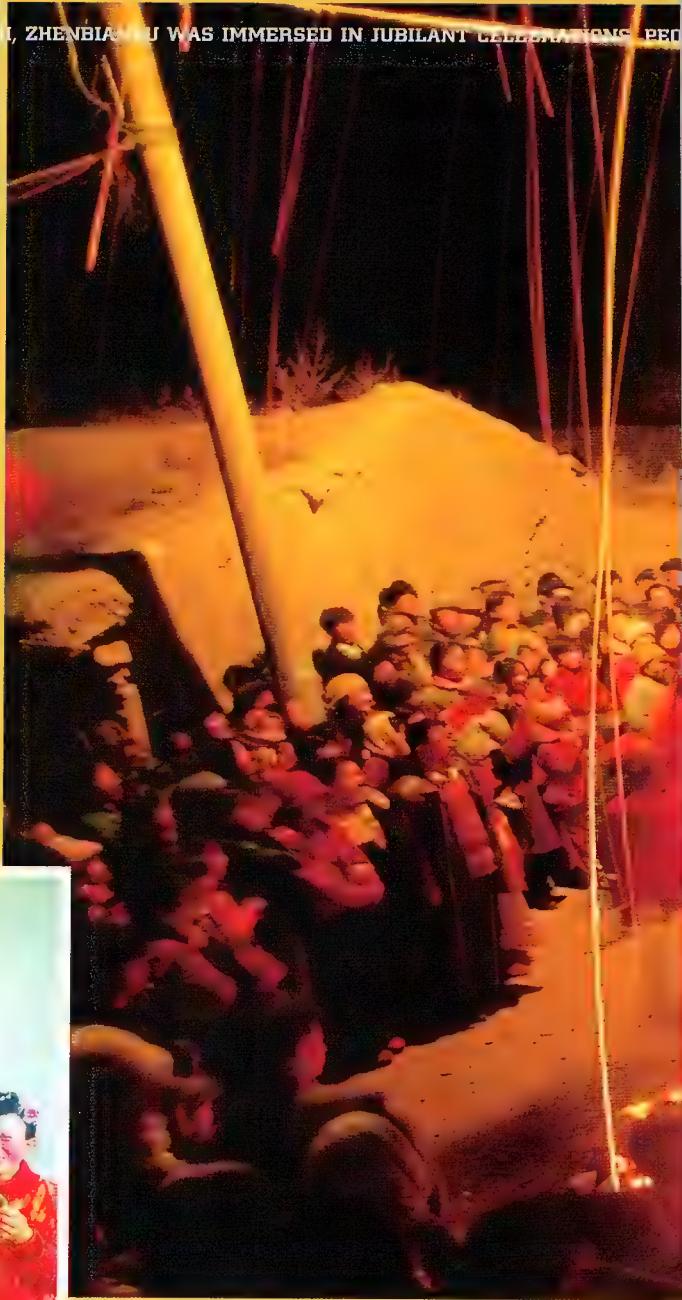
be the host for a television crew. A few years ago, a TV crew from Beijing came to his home to shoot a play.

The Wangs took care of the TV crew completely. For over a month, the whole family heated water, cooked, borrowed props for the crew, and solved many difficulties for them. Every day, villagers came to watch, standing inside the courtyard, on the courtyard wall or on the house roofs. Once several people fell to the ground through a hole in the roof, but luckily, no one was injured.

Regrettably, neither Wang Cai nor the villagers viewed the screening of the play later on. I asked him, "You didn't do it for money and haven't even seen the play, how do you feel about it all?" Wang Cai said, "Well, a good reputation is most important to a man."

Red Cotton Coats

From the first to the 15th day of the Spring Festival, Zhenbianbu's greatest event was folk performances by the villagers themselves. Following a call from the village loudspeakers, the villagers would gather to watch performances such as Boat and Yangge dances and lantern shows. The performers would pass every household and visit neighbouring villages.





3

All along my way back to the city on the 16th day, inside and outside the Great Wall, heavy snowfall was falling.

©

Translated by F. Huang

1. Boat Dance, a traditional performance for the New Year
2. The women who dance the Yangge Dance in their red wedding coats
3. The performers visit every household before they go to a neighbouring village.
4. The jubilant New Year's eve



4





ADMIRING BEAUTIFUL SNOW SCENERY IN CHINA

Wherever winter arrives, the world of snow becomes a great attraction, particularly for people living in areas without any. Across China's vast territory, there are many places, not only in the north, but also in the south, where people can admire beautiful snow scenes. Here you can see what attracts people to the "snow country" of China.





SNOW ON MOUNT HUANGSHAN — ANOTHER WONDER OF THE WORLD

Photos by Tan Ming Article by Shai Zai and Ling

There is a saying: "No mountain is worth seeing after a trip to the Five Sacred Mountains; no sacred mountain is worth seeing after a trip to Mount Huangshan." Now people are starting to say: "No snow is worth seeing after a trip to Mount Huangshan." It seems that the snow scenery on Mount Huangshan has become another wonder of the world.

With a yearning for physical exercise and a fascination for mountains, I joined a five-day tour to Mount Huangshan during the Spring Festival.

Entering the Mountains of Anhui

The tour started with a very quick trip to Hangzhou, capital of Zhejiang Province where we visited the West Lake. Despite a temperature of only 3°C overnight, the weather was fine the following day as we started for Mount Huangshan in Anhui Province. There were multi-storey buildings and broad roads on either side of the highway in the prosperous Zhejiang Province. As the buildings gradually decreased in number, we realised that we had entered the mountainous area of Anhui Province. It was an interesting experience travelling along the zigzagging routes through the mountains flanking the highway. At the sight of snow-capped mountain peaks in the distance, I excitedly imagined myself in a world of silvery snow and beautiful plum flowers on Mount Huangshan.

After the bus turned and came to a stop at a sharp turn we saw a long line of vehicles in front and a crowd of people. There was a quarrel between the drivers of two vehicles that had crashed head on. Stuck in this long traffic jam, we all got off the bus to stretch our legs and gaze at distant snowy peaks. Only when the policemen arrived on the scene did the quarrel subside and the long line of vehicles begin to disperse.

Previous page: During the Spring Festival time, there is usually moist cold air above the area south of the Yangtze River, causing snowfalls on Mount Huangshan. Lovely scenes of snow-laden Huangshan pines can only be seen on a day of heavy snowfall.

1. When the snow stops falling, thick masses of cloud, whiter even than the snow, often rise from the deep valleys and forests below.
2. Pine trees in the wind gaps between mountain peaks laden with snow are a unique feature of Huangshan.

Our attention was drawn to the frost on the drooping tree branches outside the windows, which had been transformed into crystal marvels by the headlights of the bus.

A Cold Night of -6°C

The hotel in the city of Huangshan (Tunxi) where we had planned to stay was full. We had no choice but to take a bus to Huangshan Hotel half way up the mountain. Although generally it is not safe to drive up the mountain at night, with a highly skilled driver doing a moderate speed, we felt somewhat at ease. After we had entered the Huangshan Administrative Zone, the mountain road began to follow a zigzag course. All we could see through the windows were trees in the darkness of the night. With every sharp turn there were fearful cries from the passengers. Gradually, the cries changed to excited acclams, for in the headlights of the bus, on both sides of the road, the trees with icicles hanging on the branches were transformed into crystal marvels. We felt as if we were in a fairy's crystal palace.

Unlike the noisy hotel in Tunxi at the foot of the mountain, Huangshan Hotel on the mountain was a quiet place. There was, however, a noticeable temperature difference. During a stroll in the streets of Tunxi earlier, we already felt the cold and the temperature then was 3-4°C. Now up the mountain, the thermometer showed that it was -9°C. Although I was shivering, I was in an excited mood envisioning the world of freezing cold with ice and snow that I had not seen for a long time.

In our hotel room we watched the programs of the Huangshan TV Station showing the scenic beauty of Mount Huangshan. It was wonderful to enjoy the spectacular landscapes of Huangshan before going to sleep and dreaming of the snow-covered mountain we were going to see the following day.

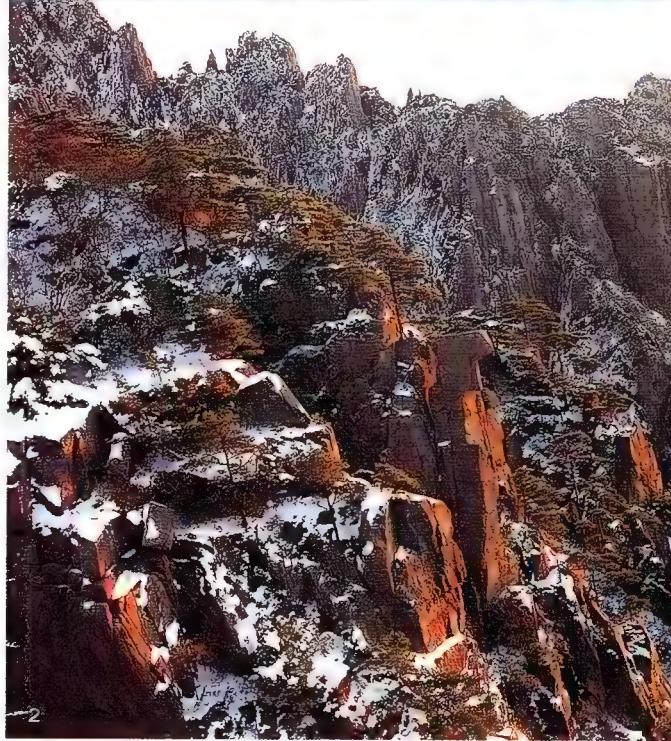
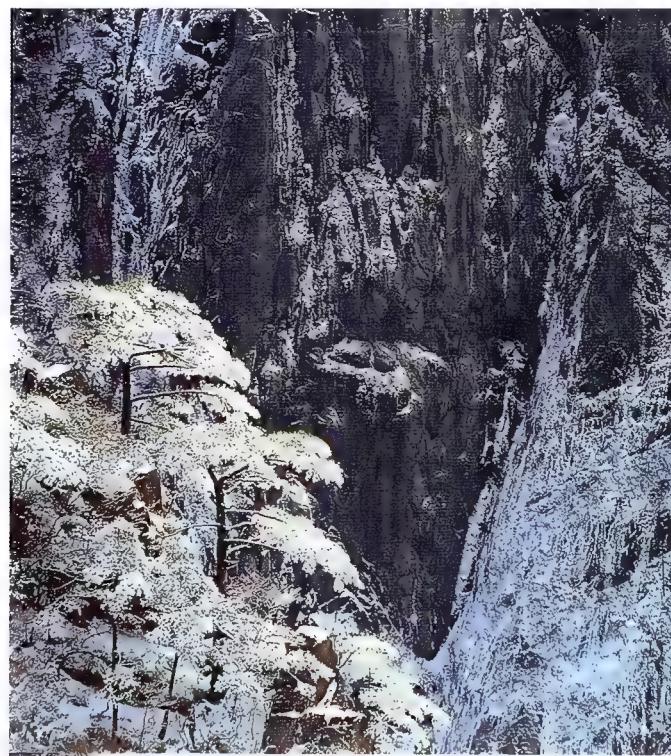
Huangshan at Its Winter Best

The early morning sunlight crowned the snow-enshrouded peaks in a golden hue. I bought a walking-stick and a pair of crampons to attach to my boots at the cable car terminus near the Yungu (Cloud Valley) Temple half way up the mountain. Then I followed the queue for another cable car to the North Sea — one of the five scenic areas on Huangshan famous for its fabulous "seas" of clouds. The North Sea is a vast expanse of clouds through which numerous peaks protrude; the air currents here cause the blanket of cloud and fog to swirl and ebb like the tide.

With only two cable cars, tourists had to queue for at least half an hour. Squeezed in a crowded car, and despite how frightening it was to look down into the deep valley hundreds of metres below, I watched the increasingly spectacular mountain scenery as the car approached the upper terminus. At the summit it was a refreshing experience to step out on the snow. The scenery was even more romantic than I had imagined. The white snowy mountain was worlds away from the photographs and video-tapes of the mountain that showed blooming flowers and red leaves in summer and autumn.

The distance between the cable car terminal and North Sea Hotel is a walk of about 20 minutes, but it seemed miles long to me. With a walking-stick and crampons, we proceeded forward like a team of explorers. The mountain path was paved in concrete and the stone steps a simple task. Even children and aged people climbed up and down the mountain with ease. But I felt clumsy walking in the boots fastened with crampons, and had to stop now and then.

The scenery along the path was extremely beautiful, though pausing to admire it allowed the coldness to seep in through my feet up my entire body. After stopping, the crampons became frozen to the ice and snow. Along the way, I saw quite a few "princes" picking up the "crystal shoes" for their "Cinderellas".



1. The large, damp flakes of the early spring snow stick easily to tree branches and cliff faces, giving them a glistening texture.
2. The Heavenly Capital Peak is dyed with a warm hue in the sunset. (by Lin Nuhou)
3. The rimes on Mount Huangshan may present a more magnificent sight than snow. (by Wang Wenbo)

On the mountain, we wandered from one scenic spot to another. Each one seemed only a short distance away, but took a long time to get there. Each time we stopped, some member of the tour group would say, "It's just around the bend over there. We'll be there in five minutes." Several times, though we all knew it would take longer time,

4. The Stone Monkey wearing a snow hat is enjoying the sight of the vast expanse of snow over the North Sea.
5. A traffic accident offered the chance to take a picture of the snow-covered terraced fields. (by Luo Qizhong)
6. The authors on the Bright Summit, the highest spot on Mount Huangshan (by Luo Qizhong)

we accepted the suggestions willingly and encouraged each other to go. Thus we visited several spots on top of the mountain, such as the Paiyun (Cloud Dispelling) Pavilion, the Feilai (Flying-in) Stone and the Guangming (Bright) Summit. Four hours had passed before we realised it.

On our way back, the sun was going down between two mountain peaks and gradually turned orange in colour. It was an enchanting sight that could not be described in words.



Tips for the Traveller

Clothing and Equipment: To climb Mount Huangshan in winter, it is absolutely necessary to prepare properly. A down coat, gloves, hat and warm trousers are essential. Temperatures in the evening can drop, suddenly, to several degrees below zero. When the sun comes out, however, the temperature rises and a windbreaker is sufficient for walking around on the mountain then. For safety's sake carry a down coat in a backpack even if you are intending only to stay on the mountain during the daytime. For hotels without heating, it is advisable to bring a battery-operated heater, which will provide five to six hours of heat. Another item of great use at the mountain top is a thermos filled with a warm drink from the hotel.

The most important task is to buy a walking-stick and crampons for your boots. The spikes of the latter in particular, though crudely made, can ensure your safety on the ice-covered paths on the mountain. Another suggestion is to carry some energising snacks, like chocolates.

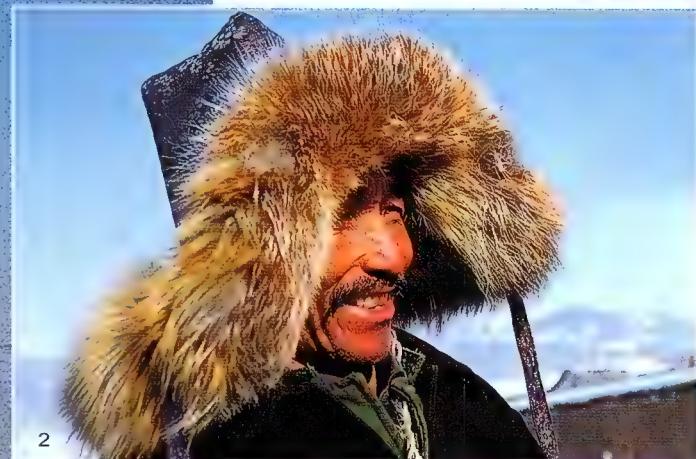
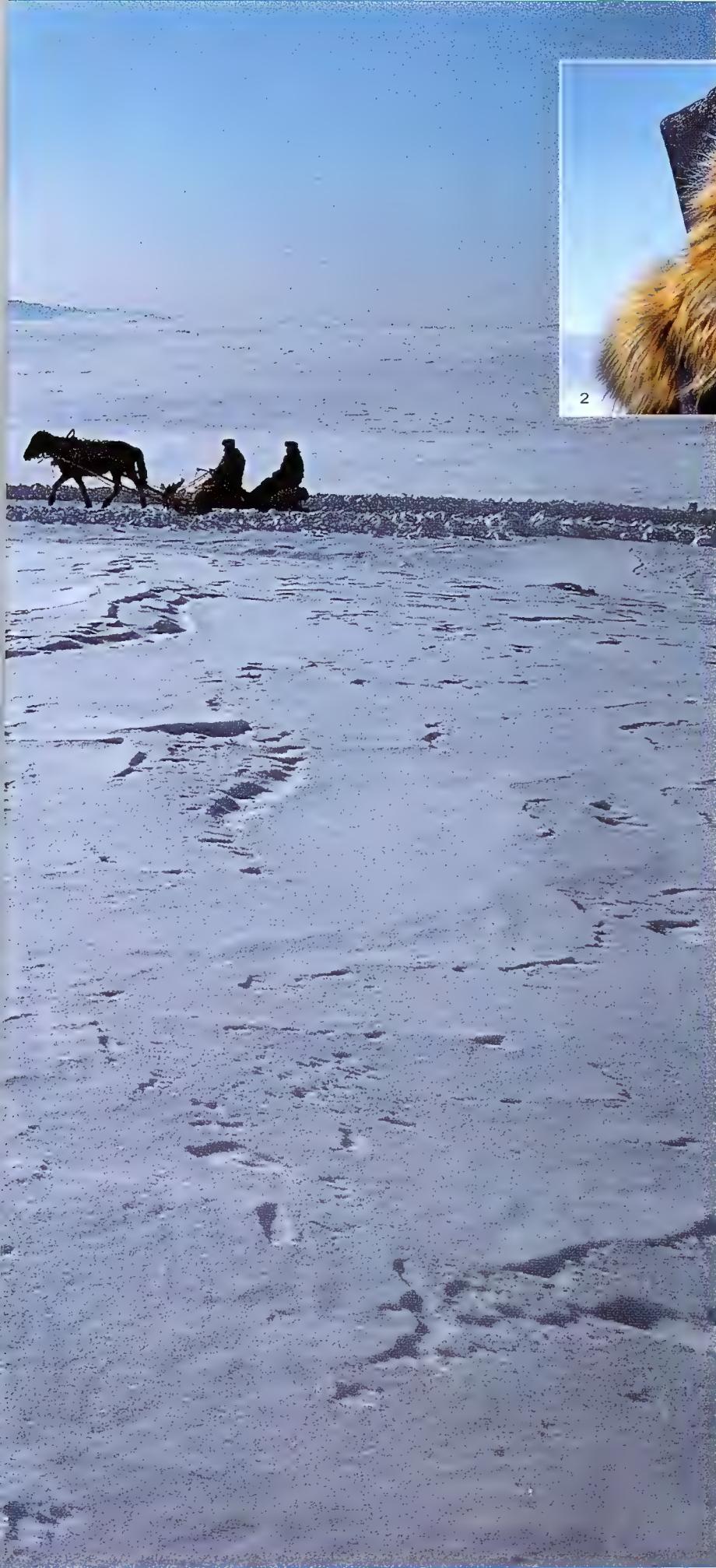
Accommodation: There are three- and four-star hotels including the North Sea Hotel, on the mountain with heating provided during the Spring Festival period. The room rate is about 800 yuan. The West Sea Hotel, at 1,000 yuan per night, is more expensive. A double room in a hostel costs about 100 yuan a night, but there is no heating provided, and the facilities are modest.

Transportation: There are regular flights between Huangshan and Guangzhou, Shanghai and Beijing, as well as Hong Kong. There are also direct trains and buses from Hangzhou, Nanjing, Shanghai and Suzhou to Huangshan.

Season: There is usually snow on Mount Huangshan during the Spring Festival (usually in mid-February). As the accumulated snow melts quickly in two or three days, it is important to go there at the correct time. To have the best possible luck you should depart for Huangshan immediately after there is a weather forecast of pending snow in the area.







FUYUN— CHINA'S SECOND COLDEST PLACE

Photos & article by Song Shijing

Many people know that Mohe in Northeast China's Heilongjiang Province is the coldest place in China. But few have ever learned that Fuyun at the southern foot of the Altay Mountains in Xinjiang is the "No. 2 North Pole" of China. Winter is seven months long in Fuyun. Its lowest temperature has been recorded as -51°C and the average annual temperature is only 1.9°C. Fuyun has even much more snow than Mohe.

These herdsmen who have lived here for generations are closely attached to the land that is their home. Though the severe winter lasts from October to May, their life appears to be joyful.

We set out from Ürümqi in a jeep with a high chassis and a powerful engine and headed north after passing Fukang at the foot of Bogda Peak. After driving over 300 kilometres in a snowstorm, we entered the Junggar Basin south of the Altay Mountains, where the accumulated snow on the road became much thicker. Climbing to a terrace, we could see that the depression ahead was a vast expanse of silvery white snow. We followed the tracks made by the trucks but the snow between the tracks was higher than the chassis of our jeep. Fortunately our driver was experienced with such driving conditions and he successfully brought us to Koktokay.

Koktokay, in the central part of Fuyun County, is rich in tantalum, niobium, gold and other rare metals. In the Mongolian language, "altay" means "gold". Fuyun, the name of the county, means "rich natural deposits" in the Han Chinese. The thermometer here read -41°C. Even our thick down coats could not prevent the cold from seeping into our bones. We borrowed some heavy sheepskin overcoats from the local Kazak herdsmen. We also added pointed foxfur hats and Kazak felt boots to ward off the cold onslaught.

The following morning, we went out on a horse-drawn sledge to visit a village named Hualingou (Birch Forest Gully). Koktokay means "green woods" in the Uygur language. The area used to be overgrown with birches but many had already been felled for use in the mines. The snow crunched noisily under this birch wood sledge, and this sound was echoed by the sound of the birch bark cracking in the bitterly cold weather. Yet, the glaring expanse of white snow presented a magnificent picture against the azure sky.

Birch Forest Gully was inhabited by families of Kazak and Mongolian herdsmen. They lived in wooden houses with very thick walls which sheltered them against the bitterly cold and long winter. A glowing fire in the house that we entered exuded its warmth. After a cup of hot milk tea offered by the host, we rode horses, with much difficulty, through the waist-high snow to an elevated area, to admire snow scenes rarely seen elsewhere.

These herdsmen who had lived here for generations were closely attached to the land that was their home. Though the severe winter lasts from the end of October to May, they appear to live an ordinary life, as joyful as any other. The young men in the village demonstrated their horsemanship for us in the snow, despite the bitter cold.

According to an ancient legend, one day when people could no longer stand the harsh cold, the chieftain of the tribe asked all the villagers to donate their furs and spare clothes to block the valley entrance and prevent the Cold Devil from slipping in. The richest household in the village, however, refused to contribute, and the plan did not succeed. As a result, winter is still long and cold with plentiful snow.

In the 1950s, the Koktokay weather station had recorded a local temperature of -51°C, the lowest in history. Later, the Fuyun Water and Electricity Department stated the lowest temperature was -60°C, but it was not officially recognised since it was not measured by a meteorological department. During the same period, Mohe in Heilongjiang Province had recorded a low temperature of -60°C measured by the county's Meteorological Department and was acknowledged as China's first "North Pole", with Fuyun coming in second. 

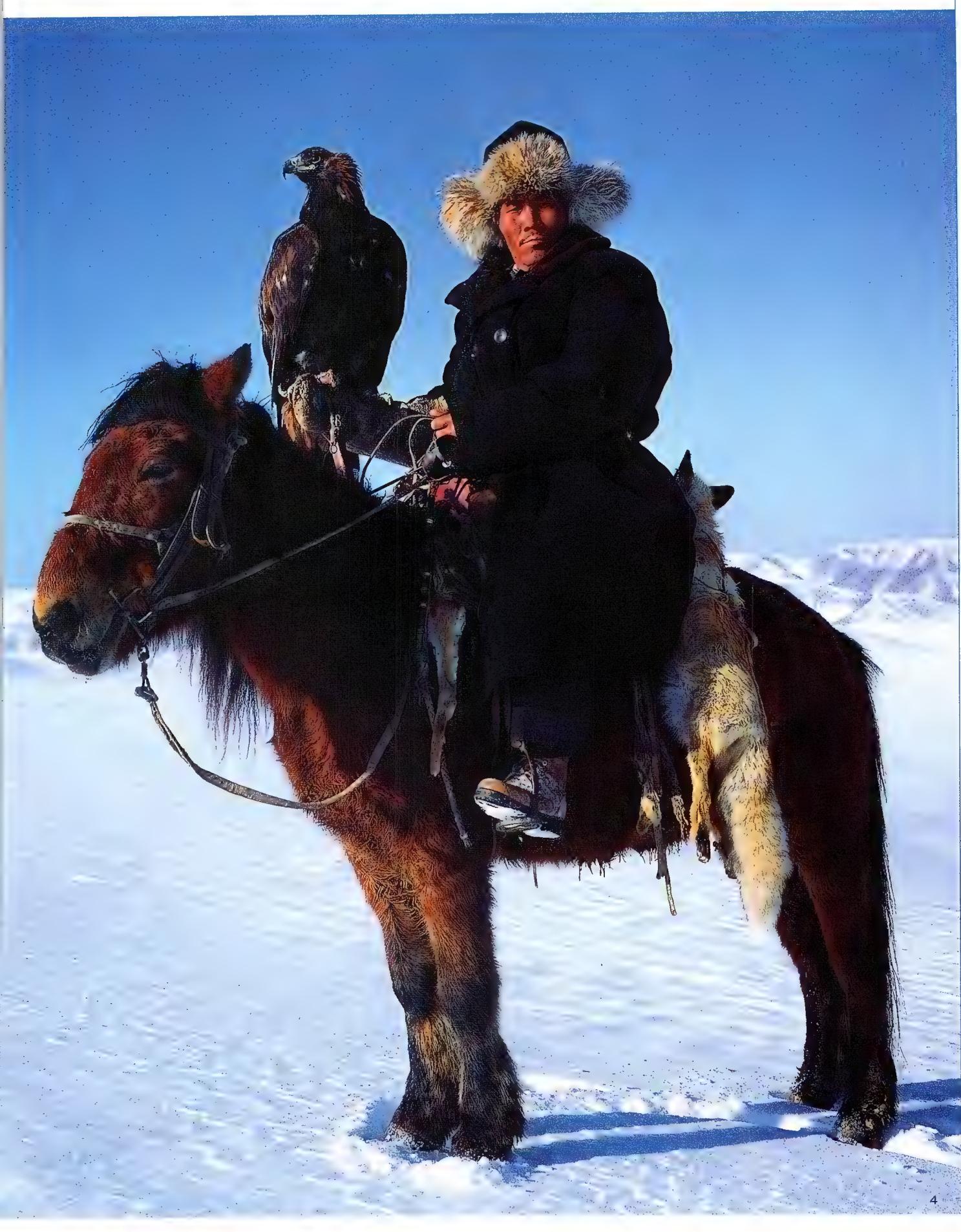
Previous page:

1. Winter in Fuyun County is seven months long with heavy snowfall. The land sealed in ice and snow presents magnificent pictures every winter.
2. No one dares walk about in the open without a warm hat of fox fur like this one.

This page:

1. Birch Forest Gully is a small village hidden deep in the snow-covered valley.
2. After the first snow at the end of October, the herdsmen in Fuyun move their animals to a winter grazing land.
3. Winter is long and cold in Fuyun but the local people still live a colourful life.
4. The local Kazak herdsmen become hunters in winter.





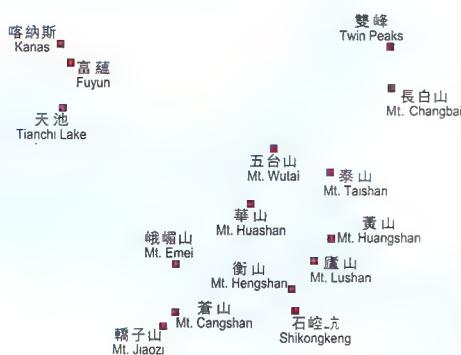
THE BEST PLACES TO ADMIRE SNOW IN CHINA

Editor's Note:

People usually presume that they can enjoy the snow in China only in places at the higher latitude in the north. There is, in fact, beautiful snow in places in both the north and the south, ranging from Xinjiang and Heilongjiang to Mount Lushan, Mount Huangshan and even the Shikongkeng in Guangdong. Moreover, one does not have to climb up a high mountain to enjoy snow. The snow-laden village houses at the Twin Peaks Forestry Farm in Mudanjiang, for example, are in a place where the beauty of nature is given a human touch.

We have listed here a number of places with a higher certainty of snowfall for readers who wish to enjoy snow in the cold winter. If you need more detailed information or if you have questions, please contact our Tourist Advisor, who will provide you with more specific and practical information.

中國賞雪勝地精選 Highlights of Snow-admiring Spots in China



(by Liu Xiangyang)

Twin Peaks Forestry Farm

This is a lumberjack's village deep in the Zhang Guangcai mountains within the boundary of the city of Mudanjiang in Heilongjiang Province.

Features: The area is said to have the heaviest snowfall in China. As the village is located in a valley, in churning winds the accumulated snow on the surrounding mountains often becomes over one metre deep. A house may be buried in snow overnight and the family has to rely on neighbours, who help clear the snow outside the door, to get out.

The Best Season: The heaviest snow falls in February-March. The large, moist snowflakes remain on the roofs and tree tops. During a heavy snow, visibility is limited to 10 metres.

Transportation: Train Y217 departs from Harbin at 9:21 p.m. on every even day and arrives at Mudanjiang at 3:21 a.m. the following morning. From Mudanjiang, Train 834 leaves at 6:40 a.m. and arrives at Changding at 9:50 a.m. Outside the station, a taxi will take you to the forest railway station, where the forest train for Taipinggou leaves at 10 a.m. and arrives there at about 1:45 p.m. A Forestry Farm shuttle bus then takes you to the Twin Peaks.

Accommodation: The hostels at Changding Township and Twin Peaks provide both lodging and three meals, at about 60 yuan a day. One can also stay in a lumberjack's home.

Advice: The snow accumulated in the gullies is unfathomably deep and great care is needed when moving about. As temperature may drop to -30°C, plenty of warm clothes are required.

(See Issue No. 208 for details.)

Yabuli

A famous ski centre in China, Yabuli is located at 1,400 metres above sea level within the boundary of the city of Shangzhi in Heilongjiang Province and about 190 kilometres from Harbin. The tall mountains and dense forests in the area also make Yabuli a good place for admiring snow.

Features: Besides skiing, you can also ride a cable car to the top of a mountain to feast your eyes on the undulating chains of snow-draped mountains.

The Best Season: December-March. The amount of snowfall varies each year.

Transportation: Yabuli can be reached by train or bus from Harbin. From the Yabuli Railway Station a bus goes to the ski centre.

Accommodation: The Windmill Villa is a luxurious place, where a deluxe room costs 500 -700 yuan, and a room in the Youth Hostel, 360 - 420 yuan. There are Chinese, Western and fast-food restaurants in the villa. Winter, the Spring Festival in particular, is the busiest season. Reservations must be made in advance. Telephone: (431) 345 5088, 367 8616.

Advice: Severely low temperatures may occur on the mountain top. Skiers should follow an instructor.
(See Issue No. 211 for details.)



(by Shan Xiaogang)

Mount Lushan

Mount Lushan, at the delta where the Yangtse River connects with Lake Boyang in the northern part of Jiangxi Province, is a famous summer resort in China. In recent years, it has also become a popular place to admire the snow.

Features: In winter, when the cold and warm currents clash over Mount Lushan, they create bellowing clouds and mist, which turn the peaks into a world of snow and rime.

The Best Season: January-March.



(by Li Ziqing)

Transportation: Fly to Nanchang from Beijing, Shanghai or other cities, or take Train 106, or 538 from Shenzhen, Guangdong, to Jiujiang, from where buses frequently go directly to the summit.

Accommodation: There are hotels of different grades on Mount Lushan, ranging from 150 to 800 yuan a night. There are also cheaper hostels, from 30 to 80 yuan a night. Many sanatoriums on the mountain are also open to public at reasonable prices. All the hotels and sanatoriums have central heating.

Advice: The mountain is sheer at the Brocade Valley and Five-Old-Men Peaks. Avoid outings when the snow is deep and the path slippery. The lowest winter temperature is about -15°C.



(by Bian Zhiwu)

Mount Huangshan

Mount Huangshan in the southern part of Anhui Province is a mountain enjoying the highest fame in China.

Features: It receives a very heavy snowfall in winter. The high mountain peaks and steep cliffs, elegant pines and masses of clouds and fog make it a very interesting place for admiring snow.

The Best Season: January–February.

Transportation: There are special buses, as well as tourist trains, reaching the foot of the mountain from Nanjing, Shanghai, Suzhou and Hangzhou.

(For accommodation and advice, see report elsewhere in this issue.)

Lake Tianchi on the Tianshan Mountains

The lake is located at the western foot of Bogda Peak about 20 kilometres to the east of the city of Ürümqi in Xinjiang.

Features: Sheltered by the eternally snow-capped Bogda Peak, the lake is encircled by evergreen conifers, which form a beautiful contrast against the white snow. In winter, the ice on the lake is nearly a metre thick.

The Best Season: November–March.

Transportation: There are special buses running between Ürümqi and Lake Tianchi. Visitors can also charter a van, but they should beware of the road conditions before setting out.

Accommodation: Many of the holiday villages and hotels in the mountains are closed in winter. Only the Ice and Snow Sports Training Base provides food and lodging for tourists.

Advice: It is safest to go with a local snow-admiring tourist group organised by a travel agency in Ürümqi.



(by Liu Hui)



(by Lin Yiping)

Mount Emei

Mount Emei in the central southwestern part of Sichuan Province, 150 kilometres from Chengdu, is one of the four great Buddhist lands in China.

Features: Mount Emei rises over 3,000 metres above sea level and receives a heavy winter snowfall. The firs on the mountain with an accumulation of snow on their branches are particularly elegant. From the Golden Summit, the snow-capped peaks of the Gongga Mountain appear like fairy mountains floating on a sea of clouds.

The Best Season: December-March.

Transportation: Visitors can take the special bus or the tourist train from Chengdu and get off at the Mount Emei stop, where a mini-bus will take them directly to Leidongping. The cable car at Leidongping goes to the Golden Summit.

Accommodation: All the temples on the mountain provide lodging and food for visitors. There are also hostels and hotels, with costs ranging from 30 yuan to 200 yuan per night.

Advice: The wind on the mountain top is strong and it is cold. Winter temperature is often at about -20°C.



(by Shi Baoxiu)

Changbai Mountains

The Changbai Mountains at the border between Jilin Province and Korea are under the jurisdiction of the Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture. The main peak is 2,691 metres above sea level.

Features: Even though the winter of ice and snow lasts from October to April, it is advisable to avoid the bitterly cold months with fierce winds in December, January and February, and go into the mountains in October, November, March or April.

Transportation: Take a train from Changchun or Jilin to Tonghua and switch to another train to reach Erdao Baihe Town. After reaching the mountain pass by bus, you tour the mountains on foot to admire the snow.

Accommodation: There are several hotels and holiday villas in the town of Erdao Baihe and at the foot of the mountains. The Ice and Snow Sports Training Base also provides food and lodging for visitors at a rate of about 100 yuan per night.

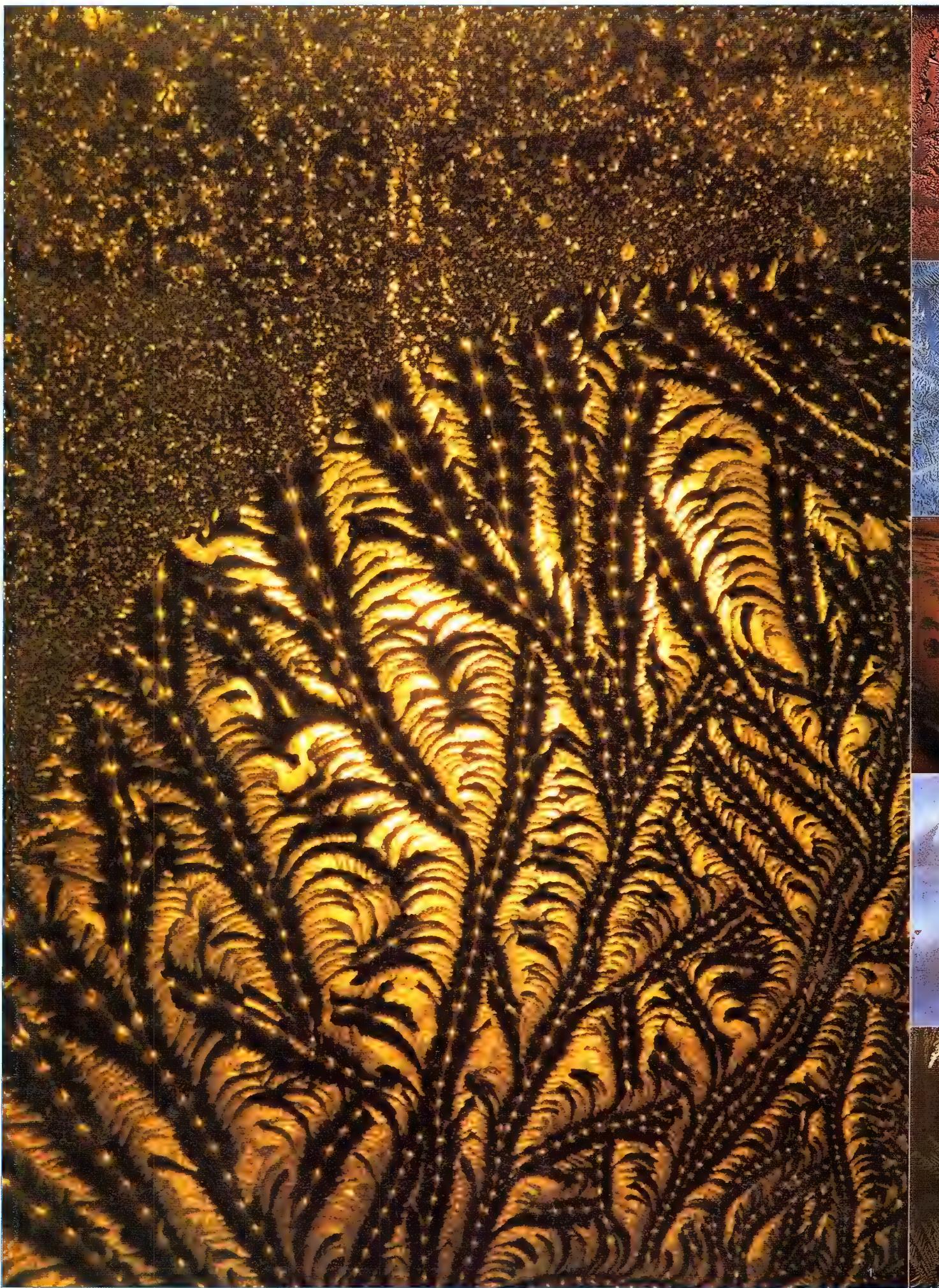
Advice: It is advisable to hire a vehicle and a guide from the Changbai Mountains Scenic Area Administrative Bureau at Erdao Baihe Town. The Hot-Spring and Great Waterfall areas are relatively safe. If visitors wish to go up the mountains, they should go at least in a group of five people with a guide. A long rope should be prepared and they should return in the afternoon on the same day. They should under no circumstances stay on the mountain top, where there is often a windstorm and the temperature can drop to -30°C at night.

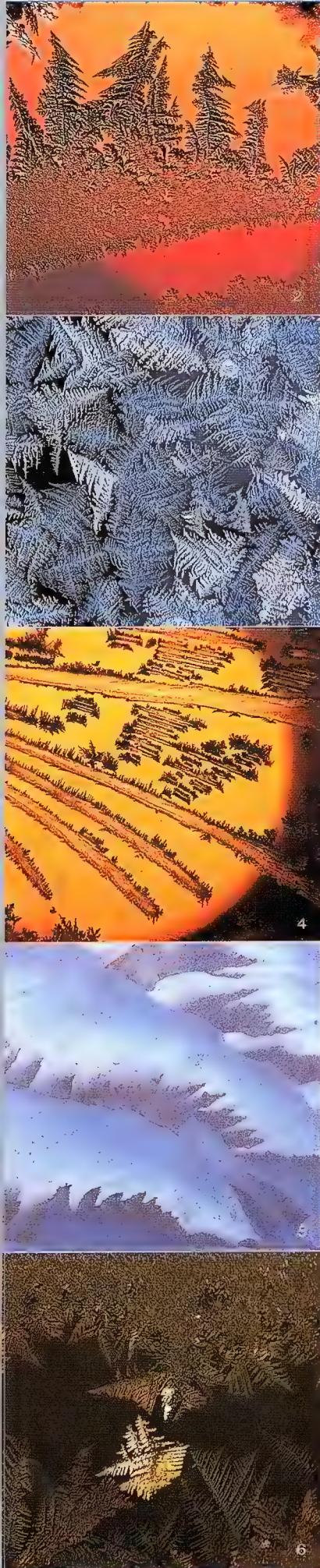
Other Recommendations:

Places such as Fuyun, Mohe, Kanas and Mount Cangshan and the Jiaozhi Snow Mountain in Yunnan, are also enchanting spots for admiring snow but cannot be reached by ordinary tourists. To go to these places, one must be mentally and materially fully prepared because these are distant places with deep accumulated snow and inconvenient transportation. The temperature is extremely low and tourist facilities are poor.

If any one of our readers is bold enough to try these places, please contact our editor, who will provide the necessary information.

There are also other mountains where people can admire snow scenes in winter, such as the Shikongkeng in Guangdong, Mount Hengshan in Hunan, Mount Taishan in Shandong, the Wutai Mountain in Shanxi and Mount Huashan in Shaanxi, but snowfall in these places is uncertain.





HOARFROST

Photos by Zhang Xiaoyu Article by Shu Huizi



When the land is dull grey in winter in the north, it is the southerners who always want to go north to experience the freezing cold and snow — with red noses and numb ears. It is the chance to roll, stumble and crawl in a world of ice and snow, and to see hoarfrost or rime, that is an incomparable joy to them.

Hoarfrost occurs on window panes, not in the freezing cold outside, but on the inside of a moist and warm room. Staying in a hotel with central heating, you will not be able to see frost because the room air is too dry. Riding in a train through a wintry night, however, you will be amazed by the beauty of the hoarfrost on the windows in the morning when the orange-red sun highlights them.

If you are staying in someone's house in the forest area of the Northeast, you will have more chances to see hoarfrost. As the family cooks and boils water on a stove inside the house every day, the air in the rooms is full of water vapour. When night falls, the water vapour freezes on the window panes to form hundreds of varieties of patterns — bird feathers, tree leaves, a dense forest of firs, blooming flowers, mountains or translucent precious stones. The endless varieties of patterns change every day and are never repeated.

As a child, I had developed a special love of hoarfrost. In those days when most people had paper windows instead of glass panes, my family was lucky enough to have a glass pane about a square foot in size fixed in the middle of the window, which made it possible for me to watch the changing varieties of hoarfrost. Each winter morning, the first thing I did was to look at the glass to see what were on it — flowers, trees or glittering precious stones. I would stay in the brick bed watching the fantastic hoarfrost until the sun rose higher, the hoarfrost was melted and it was warm enough for me to play outside the house. Later, at school, I excelled in drawing and was very proud of myself. Today, I can see I was probably inspired by the hoarfrost on the small window pane.

1. Is this an aerial view of mountain ranges?
(by Li Zhong)
2. A fir forest
3. Ferns

4. Orchid
5. A snow-covered steppe
6. Feathers
7. Velvet



Peach blossoms covered in snow and ice (by Chen Xinxiao)

A SNOW ADVENTURE IN JINGGANG MOUNTAIN

Photos & article by Zhang Mingji

It was the second day of the lunar year when I learned that Hunan and Jiangxi provinces on the middle reaches of the Yangtse River had received a heavy snowfall. Excited by the prospect of spending the later part of my Spring Festival (Chinese New Year) vacation knee-deep in snow, I invited two friends to set out together for snow-bound Jiangxi. For those of us living in Guangdong in South China, visiting snow covered regions is a great novelty.

Usually the No. 105 State Highway would be crammed with cars and trucks, but because it was the Spring Festival the roads were quite empty, and we managed to make good progress. Five hours later we arrived in Xinfeng in Jiangxi Province. Through the dim light we saw the glimmer of the snow covered mountains in the distance and the usually green hills and fields were nowhere to be seen. The new shoots and tender buds on the trees were

hidden away under a thick blanket of white snow. Drifting snowflakes blended with drizzle landed gently and silently on the ground. Gazing across the vast expanse of whiteness, I was touched by the mystery of nature.

The next morning we leapt for joy as we stepped out of our hotel and were greeted by a wonder world of snow and ice. Clothed in a heavy mantle of snow, the ancient villages lost their detail and clusters of icicles hung from the eaves of the



The snowy scene of a mountain village (by Zhang Mingji)

houses. We were eager to venture out and explore the land. Underfoot, the snow made crackling sounds as we walked through the fields. Coming across a Chinese cabbage encased in snow, I gave it a swift kick, expecting the snow to fly off, but instead a large piece of ice in the shape of a cabbage leaf broke off. Picking up a stone I threw it into a nearby pond, and it sent up a shower of ice and water as it broke through the surface. The trees in the mountain forest were covered by fresh snow too. Devoid of leaves, their dark branches contrasted sharply against the silvery snow. Nearby, water gurgled through the mountain streams.

We drove on, and without really knowing it, we reached the Luoxiao Range where the peaks were taller, the forest denser, and the snow thicker. The sky was overcast and a snow storm obscured everything. There were not many vehicles on the icy road except a few that had iron chains fitted to their wheels. Although our car did not have such equipment we still managed to arrive safely at the foot of Jinggang Mountain.

The Jinggang Mountain really was a white world reigned by tranquillity and silence. There was not a soul to be seen anywhere, except for a few visitors from Guangdong having a snowball fight on the slope. "The snow scene in the still higher Huangyangjie must be even more majestic!" I told myself. Just then, our car started to skid quite dangerously. A short man, heavily clad like a penguin, came up to us and shouted, "The road ahead has been sealed." We hastily retreated back along the road we came and, fortunately, reached Tanghu, a small town, before it got dark.

The town's only inn was closed for the Spring Festival holidays. So, we drove our car to an empty vegetable market. After we nibbled on our food, we tried to get some sleep. It was impossible. We spent the night in a state of semi-consciousness with the temperature hovering around -6°C. Our only consolation was that we were experiencing something new. While the whole of China was celebrating the New Year, we were here shivering in a deluge of snow.

The next morning, the snow had stopped. Facing the pure, silvery world again, we had all forgotten about the

bitterly cold night. The snow had melted in the ploughed paddy fields, but the low lying banks between the fields were still covered with snow and formed many irregular funnels of white on the mountain slopes. The grass and trees beside the roads, laden with a thick layer of ice, looked like banks of coral made of crystal. Particularly beautiful were the plum blossoms, each one resembling a miniature piece of art. The green bamboo stems, usually erect and upright, were bowed under the weight of the heavy snow. Everything revealed another side of nature in the depths of winter. The village houses nestled at the foot of the mountain could only be recognised from the wisps of smoke that arose from their chimneys and mingled with the boundless world of snow. The land looked exceptionally tranquil and vast.

Our enjoyable trip to the Jinggang Mountain soon came to an end. Though it cannot be said to be a comfortable journey, it is a passage of experiences that we will never forget. ☐

Translated by Xiong Zhenru



Bending bamboo (by Chen Xiniao)



It seems a white carpet has been spread in the fields. (by Chen Xiniao)



Leaves seem to have been crystallised. (by Zhang Mingji)

Tips for the Traveller

Jinggang Mountain located in southwest Jiangxi Province is a popular scenic attraction in China. There are many places of historical interest such as Huangyangjie, Zhushachong, the Eight-Face Mountain and the Dragon Pool. Fifty kilometres to its west, in eastern Hunan, is the Tomb of Emperor Yandi, the legendary ancestor of the Chinese. Jinggang Mountain is especially famous for its numerous waterfalls and cloud formations.

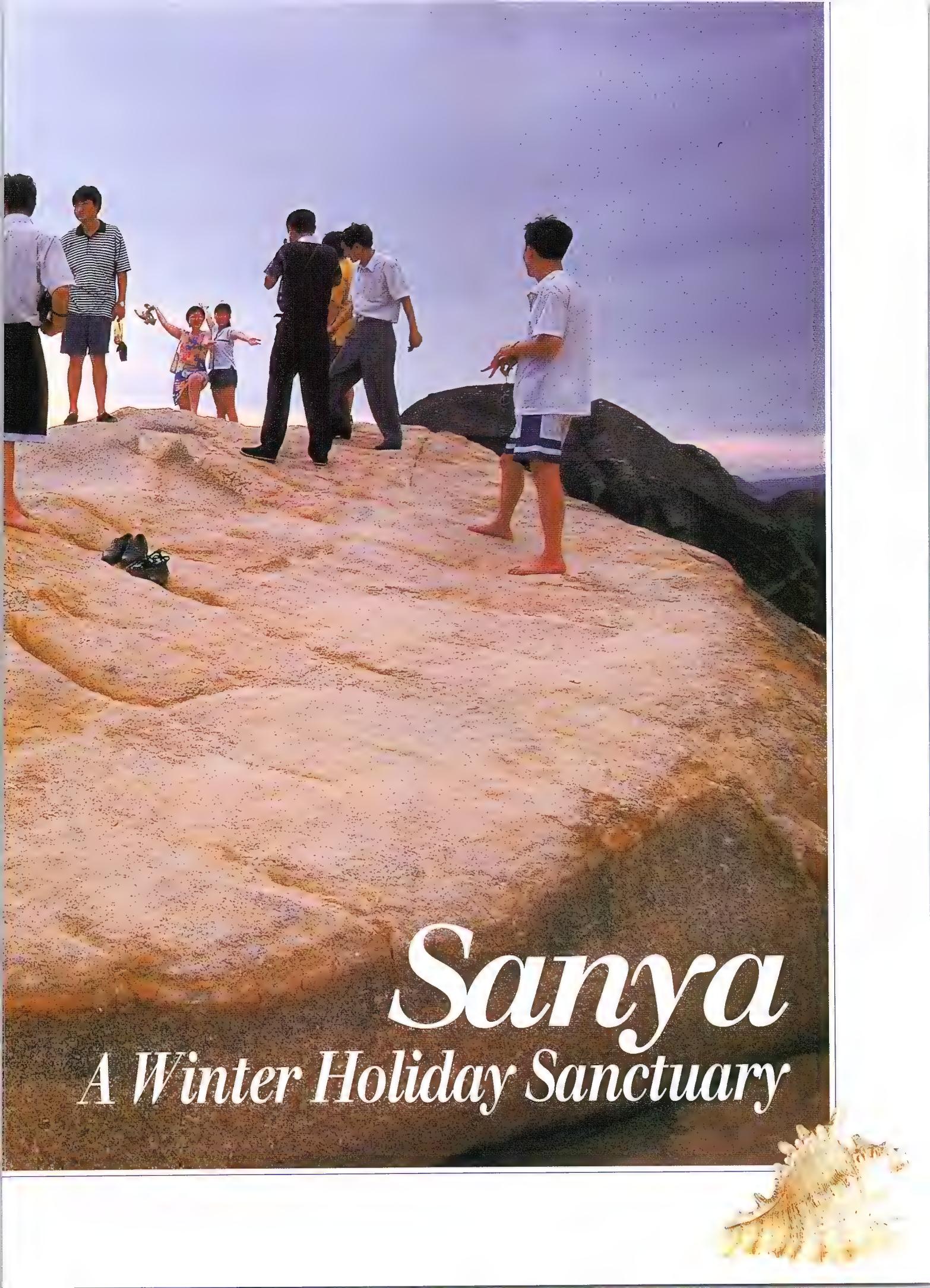
Food: There are many restaurants on the mountain. Delicacies include fresh bamboo shoots and frogs.

Accommodation: There are approximately 10 hotels on the mountain with rates of 30-80 yuan per bed. Room conditions are rather good, with IDD phones.

Transport: Take a bus from Ganzhou to Suichuan, then begin climbing the mountain from the northern slope at Hengdian; or take a bus from Nanchang to Ji'an, and climb the mountain from the west.

Once December comes, Sanya enters its spring when the sun is pleasantly warm and the wind is agreeably gentle. Not only does winter never exist here, even an autumn breeze is a rare natural phenomenon. Throughout most of the year, the most common comment on the weather is "very hot".





Sanya
A Winter Holiday Sanctuary





Yalong Bay: *Blue Skies and Clear Seas*

Photos & article by Ye Qing

Even in early spring, the sea waters at Sanya are delightfully warm and gentle. The fine white sand at the Yalong Bay — the best swimming spot in Sanya — is incredibly soft and pure. The waters remain crystal clear even when sea waves surge and beat the coast. The beach is also a superb place to go for an extra long and refreshing walk, or to simply spend time relaxing and watching the waves. As well, tourists can rent speedboats and sail boats on the beach. Who could ever refuse the great pleasure of such sports on this clear blue sea?

The entire three-kilometre-long Yalong Bay has been divided into many zones under the care of hotels and holiday villages who patrol their areas to ensure that the beaches and the sea remain clean. The bay, which used to be a large wilderness area, is the only national holiday zone in the tropical regions of China. Its development was well planned, and as a result, gardens, parks, hotels and other tourist facilities are well located with adequate space.

The Central Square of Yalong Bay joins the Yalong Avenue and Seaside Boulevard. It is an open area facing the sea, and in its middle stands a 20-metre-tall sculptured pillar featuring mythical creatures. Underneath the square is the Shell Museum where wall lights illuminate a breathtaking range of crustaceans of all descriptions from the dark sea world below. This is the first museum in China that both displays and sells shells.

North of the Greater and Lesser Dragon pools at the Yalong Bay is the Butterfly Valley. At the entrance to this sanctuary for colourful butterflies is an exhibition centre displaying butterfly specimens from China and many other places in the world. It is the colours and the variety that enthrall visitors in this museum.

Across the valley from the Butterfly Museum is the Cactus Holiday Inn, a building which reveals a strong Southeast Asian tropical architectural style. Its outdoor swimming pool is said to be the largest among hotels all over China. The room rate, however, is certainly within the means of most visitors, making it a quality choice for holidays and honeymoons. The Gloria Plaza next to it, however, is a sign of luxury, as it is known as a "super five-star" hotel. The two-kilometre-long beach front, rooms with sea vistas, and gentle sea breezes through the lounge ensure that guests enjoy their stay.



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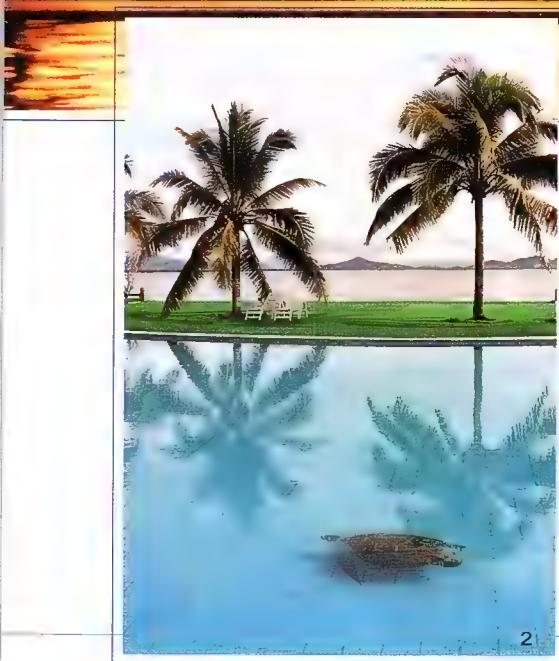
Previous page:
The "Land's End" is a must-see place for visitors to Sanya.

Previous page (insert):
The entrance to the Butterfly Valley is unusually imaginative.

This page:

1. The fine white sand beach of the Yalong Bay
2. Hawksbill turtles from Sanya
3. The newly-constructed South Hill Buddhist Culture Garden, near where a monk of the Tang Dynasty, Jian Zhen, spent over a year preaching Buddhism after his failed fifth attempt to go to Japan.
4. The Shell Museum gives visitors a feeling of being in the depths of the dark sea.
5. Visitors to the Butterfly Museum and Shell Museum will all find something to buy.





Wuzhi Island: *Natural Beauty and Corals*

Photos by Zhang Wei, Cheng Xun Article by He Da

Among the newly opened tourist attractions, Wuzhi Island, an isle of natural beauty and mystery beyond the larger island of Hainan, holds the greatest attraction for me. It was previously a military forbidden zone, a condition that contributed to the most complete preservation of the natural resources on the island and around its seabed.

The island received its name from a rare hard-shelled creature of the sea, locally called *Aoji*. A bird's eye view, however, shows the island in the shape of a green butterfly. It lies peacefully in the blue waters of the Haitang Bay northeast of Sanya City, 2.7 kilometres from the wharf at Linwang Town. It takes only 10 minutes to get to the island by speedboats and another 10 minutes will be enough to encircle the 1.48-square kilometre island.

The islet is beautifully formed with the middle part rising and falling gently where green coverage is thick and strong. The northern and western parts are rather flat with a beach stretching over 1,000 metres. The eastern and southern parts are dominated by precipitous cliffs and rocks beaten and washed by the surging waves. The earliest developers of the island were army soldiers who, during several decades here, had dug a four-kilometre-long tunnel and many covered lookout holes on the rocks. The present developer is making careful use of the natural terrain to have bamboo bungalows, one-storey houses, swimming pools, paths, swings, stone tables and stools nicely hidden under the shade of green trees.

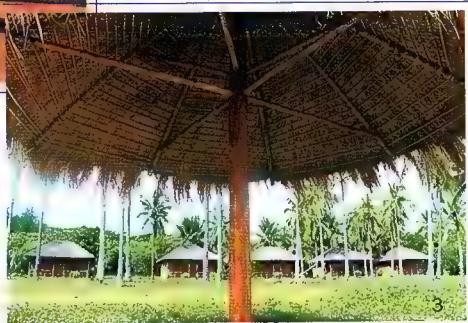
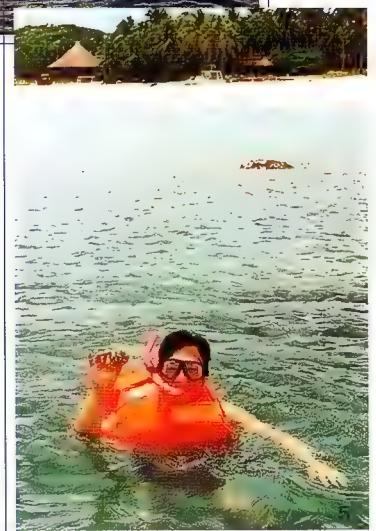
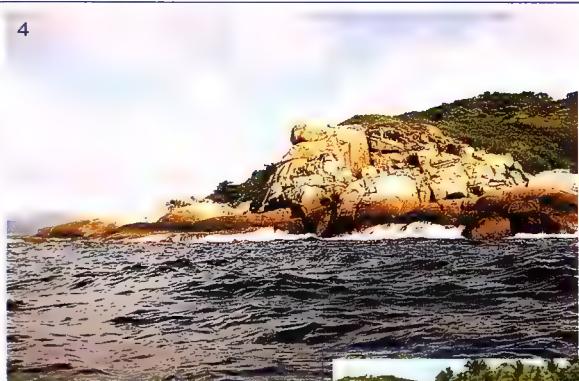
Apart from the tranquillity and natural look of the island, the water around Wuzhi offers a special attraction. Free from pollution, the water is so clear that you can see right to its bottom 25 to 70 metres below, providing divers of all levels with many good sites. About eight to nine metres off the beach in the north is a group of beautiful coral reefs and schools of fish that snorkellers can easily enjoy. In the west, large patches of corals, some swaying with the current, at the depth of 15 to 20 metres, entice scuba divers to descend and discover the secrets of the sea. A four-star class Japanese diver named Ito, with an internationally famous diving club, found three coral reef belts at 30-metre depth in the east of the island. From his two diving trips here he concluded that the diving environment is among the first-class ones in the world, comparing favourably with those in Saipan Island and the Great Barrier Reef.

The many rocks around Wuzhi are ideal fishing terraces. Experienced anglers can throw their lines dozens of metres into the sea and be rewarded with groupers of about one kilogram. You may also rent a motorboat to fish in the deep waters south of the island where you just dip your line in and feel the fish being caught. For swimmers, there are wide beaches that

gently extend into the sea with sand so white it seems bleached. For those who want more than the caress of sea breezes there are volleyball games on the beach too. Picking seashells on the island often yields pleasant surprises.

The natural and primitive beauty of the Wuzhi Island beckons visitors to unforgettable experiences.

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1. The graceful coconut trees add beauty to the evening glow. (by Cheng Xun)
2. In this swimming pool on the island, man swims together with sea turtle. (by Zhang Wei)
3. Bamboo bungalows and pavilions under the shade of coconut trees. (by Zhang Wei)
4. This rock can be compared with the huge one in Sanya called "Land's End". (by Cheng Xun)
5. It is really an eye-opening experience to dive here since there are so many beautiful corals in the sea waters. (by Zhang Wei)

Translated by F. Huang



Location Map of Yalong Bay and Wuzhi Island

林旺鎮
Linwang Town

蜈支洲島
Wuzhi Island



Tips for the Traveller:

Transport: There are daily flights between South China cities and Sanya. Buses and taxis go from the airport to downtown and Yalong Bay. For sightseeing, taxis and motor tricycles are available. A one-day trip in a hired car from a hotel costs 600 yuan. From Linwang Town boats take visitors back and forth to Wuzhi Island.

Accommodation: The room rate at Gloria Plaza ranges between 1,088 to 2,248 yuan while its presidential suite is 20,000 yuan. At the Cactus Holiday Inn, the room rate is 500-800 yuan.

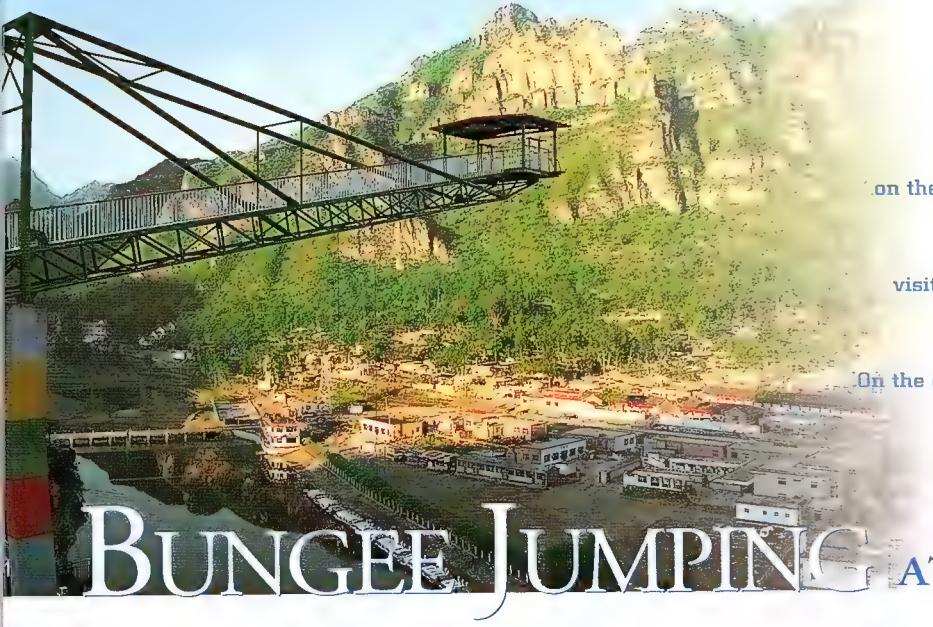
Food: Restaurants and evening market food stands offer inexpensive seafood and wild game dishes. Look for the four famous dishes of Hainan: Dongshan lamb, Wenchang chicken, Jiaji duck and Heyue crab. On the bank of Sanya River in downtown Sanya, there are also night teahouses where a table and a pot of tea only cost 30 yuan.

Shopping: At the Shell Museum and Butterfly Museum at Yalong Bay, you can buy beautiful arts and crafts made with exquisite specimens of butterflies or shells rarely found in other parts of China. Fresh coconuts, found all over Sanya, cost only 2 to 4 yuan each. There are also many other varieties of tropical fruits.

1. Testing archery skills at the Gloria Plaza

2. Windsurfers love the Yalong Bay.





BUNGEE JUMPING AT THE TEN FERRIES

Photos by Zhai Dongfeng Article by Zi Yuan

Opened on May 18, 1997, this is the first bungee centre in China. This exciting sport had long been very popular in foreign countries but unknown in China until then. So far the Beijing Bungee Centre has had more than 10,000 brave visitors, mostly from cities such as Beijing and Tianjin. Interestingly, 45 percent of these sports lovers are women. So far the oldest visitors were a 72-year-old American man and a 68-year-old Chinese woman while the youngest was only 13 years old.

The terrace is always crowded with spectators who enthusiastically cheer for the jumpers. To make a jump, one has to buy a ticket and go up to the platform by cable car. Then there is a routine check-up including psychological consultation and weigh-in, plus the filling in of forms, and commitment to buy the photos and videotapes of the action. Participants must be both physically and psychologically healthy. Those who suffer from epilepsy, mental illness, heart disease, high-blood pressure or acrophobia, or who are pregnant or have a history of bone fractures may not jump.

Having signed the "treaty of life and death", the bungee sports fans waited their turn. The first one in the line walked to the end of a board protruding over the river from the platform and dived gracefully like a flying swallow. What

Tips for the Traveller

The Ten Ferries is about 100 kilometres from urban Beijing. Long-distance buses from Tianqiao and Lianhuachi in the urban district, and trains from Beijing South (Yongdingmen) Station, go directly there.

At the Shidu (Ten Ferries) Scenic Zone on the outskirts of Beijing in Fangshan District, an eight-minute cable car ride takes visitors directly from the Juma River bank to the bungee sports centre above.

On the cliffs half way up the rugged mountain stand two jumping platforms, one at 55 metres and the other at 48 metres.



breathtaking form! I asked someone who had just completed a dive how he felt. His reply was full of confidence: "It was really exciting! Risky yes, but there is no real danger. You realize the value of your life much better once you've made one jump!" I turned to a young lady in purple: "Were you afraid?" "Well, I hesitated, scared, for more than half an hour, but from early childhood I have always tried what I'm afraid of!"

I stood at the edge of the 55-metre platform on a foot stand about a dozen centimetres wide, stretching out both my arms sideways like a bird ready for flight. From the coach behind me came words in a decisive tone: "Okay, ready! Three, two, one, go!" I felt I left the platform like a bird and tried to forcefully flap my arms, but I did not fly. Instead, I was diving at a acceleration of 9.8 metres per second. Wind whistled in my ears and for a while I felt my soul was leaving me and I was losing control. Before I reached the water, the elastic rubber rope tied around my feet pulled me back and I rebounded upwards. Wow! I could feel I was still alive! I rebounded again and again until the rope lost its elasticity, leaving me dangling just above the water. What an experience!

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Translated by F. Huang

1. The Beijing Bungee Centre at the Ten Ferries Scenic Zone
2. I felt my own existence the moment I rebounded.
3. "I feel my soul has left me and I have evaporated in the air...."
4. Returning to the "physical" world



WUQIANG

NEW YEAR PICTURES

Photos & article by Zhai Dongfeng

New Year Pictures, as the term suggests, are painted for the celebration of the (Chinese) New Year. An early folk art in China, it appeared in the early Qin Dynasty (221-207 B.C.), took shape in the Northern and Southern Song dynasties (960-1279) and flourished in the Ming and Qing dynasties (1368-1911). But at the end of the Qing Dynasty, due to political corruption and rural economic recession, the art of New Year Pictures began to decline.



The Earliest New Year Pictures: Painted on Walls

New Year Pictures came into being before the invention of printing. To ward off evil, people drew pictures of their primitive beliefs, such as the gods of plants and tiger, on their buildings. In the Song Dynasty, New Year Pictures in wood-engraving form began to emerge. Sold at the end of the year, these pictures were also used to express good wishes for the coming year.

In the Ming and Qing dynasties, growth of the trade and handicraft industry, especially the maturity of process printing, greatly promoted the development of New Year Pictures. Some New Year Picture centres eventually took shape, Wuqiang in Hebei Province being one of them.

Wuqiang New Year Pictures: Sold Across the Country

New Year Pictures in Wuqiang County is a folk art evolved from the primitive methods of cultivation, Buddhist influences, and traditional customs of Chinese ancestors living on the Central Plains. Wuqiang New Year Pictures emerged before the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368), reached a considerable scale in the early Ming, and further flourished during the Qing. During the later years of the Qing Dynasty, on the Nanguan Street of Wuqiang alone, there were 144 shops involved in the business of New Year Pictures. Besides, many more studios and workshops were found in the 50 or so surrounding villages, which indicates that several thousand local people were engaged in this business. The total annual sales of Wuqiang New Year Pictures reached over one hundred million pieces, which were sold across the country.

Rich Contents Cover Every Corner of Life

With a bright colour and exaggerated form, Wuqiang New Year Pictures have a strong local flavour and varied contents. There are door pictures, window pictures, lamp pictures, beam pictures, central room pictures, ceiling pictures, bed pictures, grain-bin pictures, antithetical couplets and scrolls. There are even pictures for cow-sheds and horse stables, which have images of gods such as the Cattle King and the Horse King. These pictures take themes from historical legends, drama stories, and famous mountains and rivers, vividly reflecting local customs and historical changes.

To engrave wood blocks for printing these pictures, the technique of cutting in relief is mostly employed, but sometimes cutting in intaglio is also used, so that each picture gives a strong sense of primitive simplicity and solemnity, achieving a great visual effect with dark lines set off by striking colours. Today, many local artists have carried on this legacy.

The Museum of Wuqiang New Year Pictures

In 1992, a museum was built in Wuqiang to display the history and development of this local cultural legacy. In the museum's main hall and two side halls are exhibited more than 2,000 art works.

There is also a studio in the museum, where not only the traditional tools used for engraving, printing and mounting are displayed, but the complete process of production is demonstrated. Visitors can join the local artisans to produce a New Year Picture of their own.

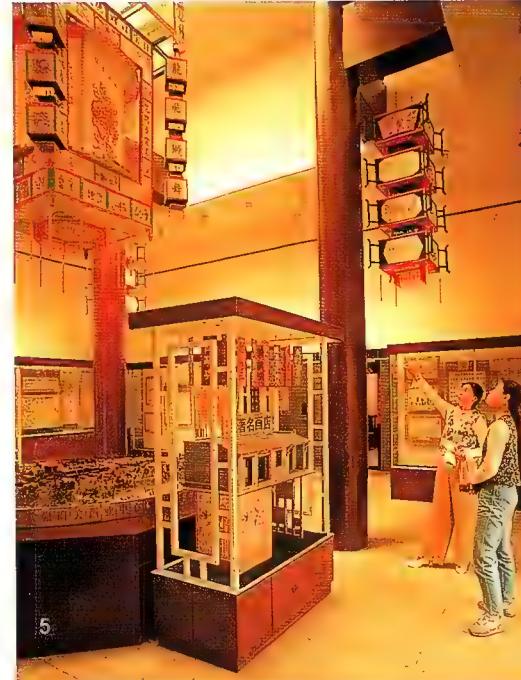
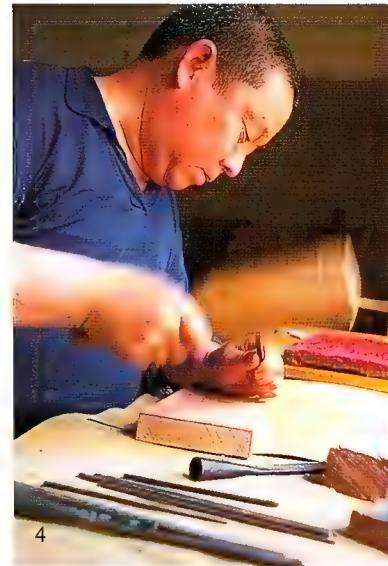
Translated by Xiong Zhenru

1. Zhao Gongming, the God of Wealth
4. Engraving a wood block

2. Happy Elements

3. Happiness and Longevity

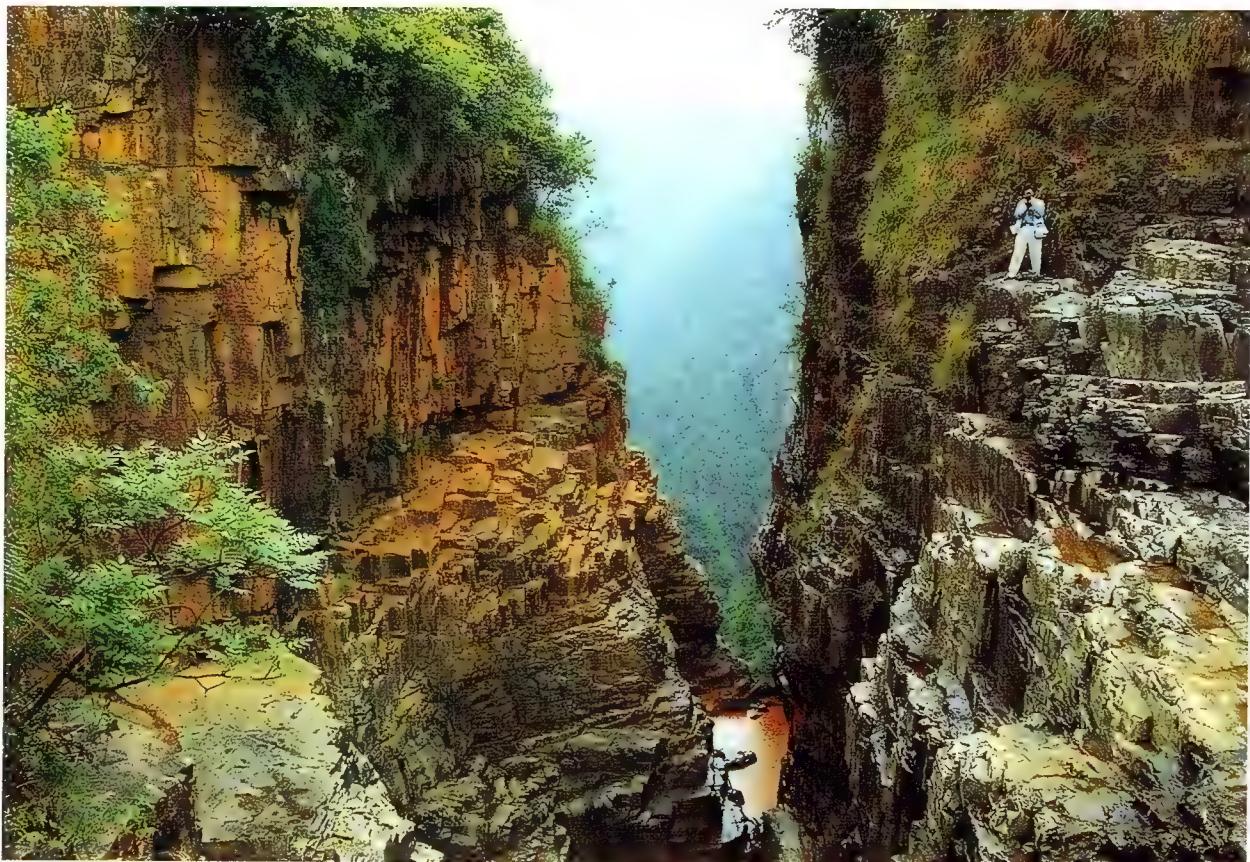
5. Inside the Museum of Wuqiang New Year Pictures



New Scenic Spots IN GUANGDONG:

Big Canyon, Highest Peak and Waterfalls

Photos by Liang Weixiong Article by Lin Weisheng



PASSING THROUGH

THE BIG CANYON

From Chengtou Village, south of Dabu Town in Ruyuan County, Guangdong Province, you climb a mountain up to a sheer precipice. The first scene is a large open space on the brown cliffs with a crevice nearly 100 metres deep. But do not mistake this for the Big Canyon; you are not there yet. Walk along a path on top of the canyon to the imposing 300-metre-deep Big Canyon. Wisps of light mist rise from the bottom of the canyon to cover it like gauze, making it look even more unfathomable.

A straight "Sky High Ladder", a staircase used in the 1970s when a hydroelectric power station was constructed, leads to the bottom of the canyon. The deeper you go, the more magnificence the Big Canyon shows you. Small paths hang on the middle of high cliffs on both sides of the canyon. The first section of the gorge looks like a narrow corridor lying between two tall mountains. There are many

ravines and rugged peaks; the vegetation grows well, the trees are as green as jadeite, streams gurgle past, wisps of light mist drift along, and from time to time wild birds fly across the sky.

If you continue southward along the river, the mountains and rocks become more varied and the scenery more beautiful; farther south, you can reach Yingde. To walk through the canyon, you must do it in dry season and make sure to reach the bottom no later than mid-day. Even at noon on a bright day, the bottom of the canyon is shrouded in mist.

To the Big Canyon

From Guangzhou take Train 216 to Shaoguan and change to a bus to Ruyuan and then to Chengtou in Dabu Town

CLIMBING GUANGDONG'S HIGHEST PEAK

The Shikengkong Peak in the Nanling Forest Park at the border between Guangdong and Hunan rises 1,900 metres above sea level and is thus the highest peak in Guangdong. The temperature on the mountain may drop to -10°C or lower in winter when it is a white world of snow, just like northern China. But this place has remained unknown to most tourists who take tours to the north to see the snow. At the summit of this magnificent peak, far into the distance, you see lofty, undulating mountains stretching to the horizon. A surprising fact is that on the summit there is an airport for helicopters, which was part of a former restricted military zone.

Shikengkong Peak is the best place in Guangdong to watch the sunrises and floating clouds. Many enthusiastic people climb up the mountain before dawn to await the sunrise and take photos, and many foreign tourists come specially to climb up to the summit.



VISITING THE 'WATERFALL CORRIDOR'



In the Nanling Forest Park there is a charming site called "Waterfall Corridor" — marvellous natural phenomena rarely seen in other parts of the country. Walking on the stone steps along the 2,000-metre-long mountain stream, you see gurgling clear spring water, fine white sand and colourful pebbles. Even more attractive are the several dozen waterfalls of different sizes on either sides of the "corridor".

Translated by Xiong Zhenru

To the Nanling Forest Park

From Guangzhou, board Train 218 in the morning and arrive in Shaoguan two hours later. Then change to a tourist bus to reach the Forest Park gate in Ruyuan County at noon. Another 40 minutes drive takes you into the boundless forest. Admission is 35 yuan per person. There are highways to the summit of Shikengkong Peak and the starting point of the "Waterfall Corridor". Climbers to the first peak must take warm jackets even in hot summer.

1. There is a smaller canyon above the Big Canyon.
2. Shikengkong Peak, with its overgrowth of plants and trees, and clean fresh air, is a good place to return to nature.
3. Part of the "Waterfall Corridor" at the foot of Shikengkong Peak

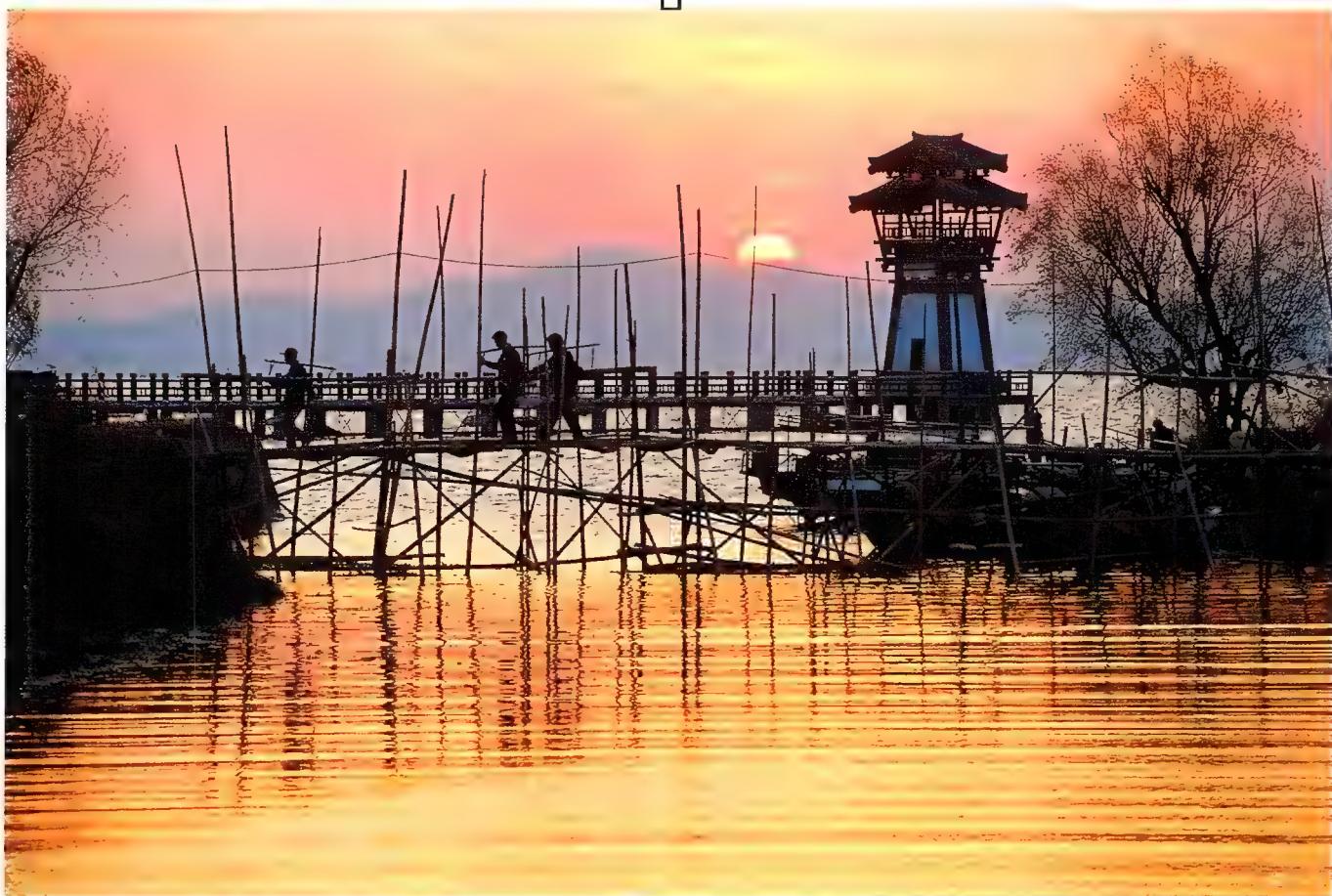


Reliving the Past in a Wuxi Studio Set

Located on the north bank of the beautiful Taihu Lake, Wuxi in East China's Jiangsu Province is a famous historical city. With a history dating back to 612 B.C. the city abounds with places of historical interest as well as scenic spots. Now the CCTV Studio Set established here has added new attractions for tourists from home and abroad.

The Wuxi CCTV Film & Television Production Co. Ltd. was established in 1987. So far three theme parks focusing on the Han (206 B.C.-A.D. 220), Tang (618-907) and Song (960-1279) dynasties have been completed. In addition to providing background sites for a dozen or so movies and TV series, these parks have also become

popular scenic spots for tourists. Here, tourists can visit the commercial streets, mansions, restaurants and teahouses built in typical architectural style of each dynasty. Lives and customs of the ancient times are demonstrated so vividly that one seems to have gone back in a time tunnel and become a character of some historical episode currently being shot at the studio set. In these exquisitely reconstructed ancient cities, songs and dances representing the Chinese cultural heritage are performed, and abstracts of the two famous TV series, *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* and *Outlaws of the Marsh*, are staged on a street or playground.



Combining Learning with Entertaining

While Chinese tourists are looking for the familiar sites or scenes they have seen on TV or in a film, most of the foreign visitors take the theme parks as a museum where they can learn more about the Chinese history and culture.



will be entertained with beautiful music played with traditional Chinese music instruments, such as chimes, flutes, zithers, bells, drums and gongs.

Mr. Amemiya, a student from Japan, visited The Three Kingdoms City with great interest because, he said, stories about the three kingdoms, the Wei, Shu and Wu during the

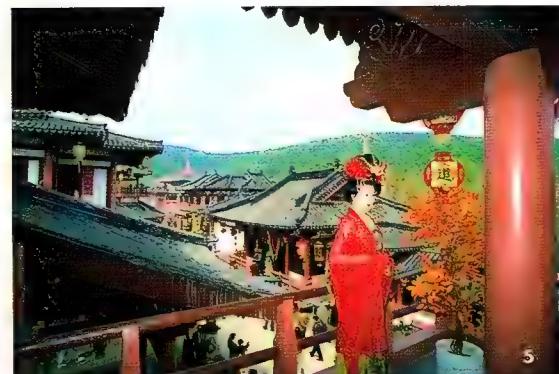
Han Dynasty, have been made into cartoons in Japan and are familiar to every household.

"The 84-episode TV series *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms* has been shown in Thailand and attracted an immense audience," said a visitor from Thailand. "Now I'm on the spot, and I find my journey to Wuxi and the studio set a worthy one." Even people from the West who are not familiar with that period of the Chinese history find the Three Kingdoms City interesting. Mr. Myrx, a Hollywood producer from the United States, expressed his excitement after watching the horsemen's performance: "It's wonderful... and I'm deeply impressed."

The Tang City: Reflection of the Past Glory

Anyone who has some basic knowledge about the Chinese history knows that the Tang Dynasty represented a golden age during which the country underwent a splendid development both in economy and culture. The Tang City in the Wuxi CCTV Studio Set is a perfect epitome of the powerful Tang empire. Its buildings, palaces, temples and pavilions well illustrate the imperial grandeur.

Visiting a teahouse, tourists can see a demonstration of the ancient Chinese tea ceremony. Sitting in the theatre, they



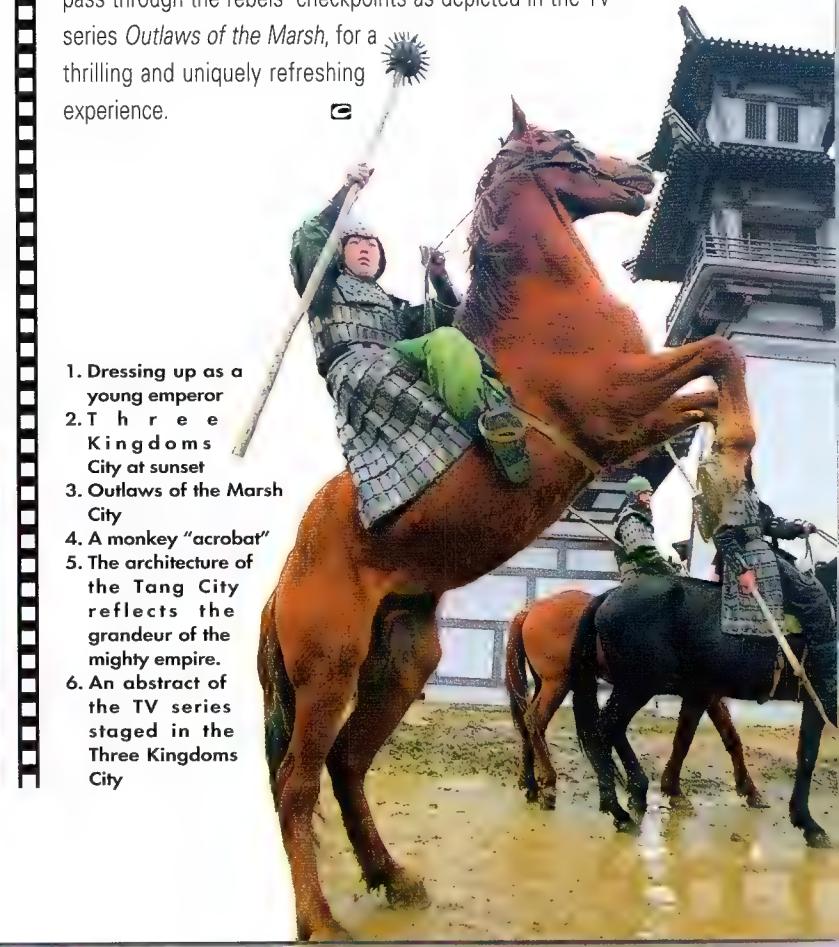
Furthermore, the audience will be immersed in the atmosphere of the gorgeous imperial court while watching the elegant dancers in performances. Once inside the Tang City visitors always find themselves reluctant to leave.

Mingling with Heroes of the Outlaws

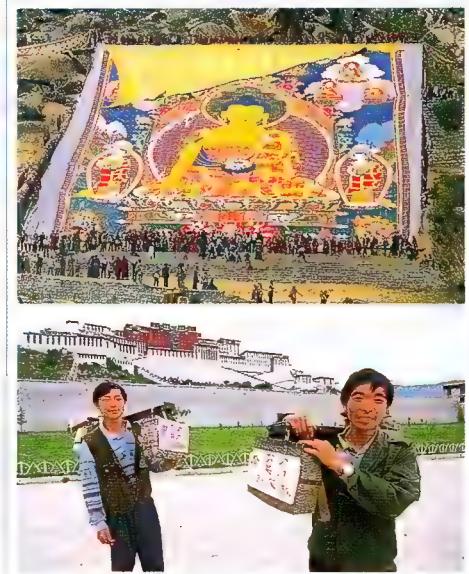
The Outlaws of the Marsh City is built on a vast land with towns, hills and a broad expanse of water. The palace buildings in the Song-dynasty style are incredibly authentic; the Xiangguo Temple looks as real as its namesake in Kaifeng, the ancient capital. Yet the street, called "Qingming Festivities by the River" because its theme is developed from a classic painting of this title, is always the favourite spot for most visitors. Visiting this street lined with workshops, teahouses and stalls, tourists may feel as if they themselves were experiencing lives of the common people of 1,000 years ago.

On the top of the hill, tourists can visit the headquarters of the 108 outlaws of the marsh who fought against an oppressive government and championed the cause of the poor and the downtrodden. One may also sail on the lake and pass through the rebels' checkpoints as depicted in the TV series *Outlaws of the Marsh*, for a thrilling and uniquely refreshing experience.

1. Dressing up as a young emperor
2. Three Kingdoms City at sunset
3. Outlaws of the Marsh City
4. A monkey "acrobat"
5. The architecture of the Tang City reflects the grandeur of the mighty empire.
6. An abstract of the TV series staged in the Three Kingdoms City



Tibet has long been considered as the unfathomable dreamland of travellers and the paradise of explorers. In fact, this highest region on earth itself is a captivating virgin land as well as a kingdom of romance and enigma. Its unique topography and ancient culture allures flocks of adventurers, anthropologists, and historians. The feature story by our reporter unveils this sacred land by leading you all the way to **Lhasa**, capital of the Tibet Autonomous Region.



by Xie Guanghui



by Wang Hui

Standing loftily on the Yunnan Plateau are the **Jiaozhi and Cangshan mountains** in Luquan and Dali respectively.

Though located in southern China, when winter falls, these mountainous regions are converted into a white world with snowy peaks, frozen lakes, ice-falls... In this tranquil silvery world, apart from snow-admiring, you can also try your hand in some more challenging activities such as mountaineering and exploration.

Inspired by some stories in China Tourism, **three generations of one family** jubilantly headed for **Harbin** in Northeast China where they had a most enjoyable and unforgettable time: visiting the fierce Northeast China Tigers in the largest wildlife park for tigers in the region, sight-seeing in Jilin, skiing in Yabuli Ski Centre... It has been a whole year since the family returned to Hong Kong, yet their memories remain fresh.



by Yi Yangdong

It has been 19 years since *China Tourism* started publication. To continue the improvements in different aspects of the magazine, we invite you to take part in determining our future development by voicing your opinion — just fill in the following questionnaire and mail or fax it back to us (copy is also acceptable). Your views will be highly valued and appreciated.

*Please return the questionnaire to Hong Kong China Tourism Press
(Add: 24/F Westlands Centre, 20 Westlands Road, Quarry Bay, Hong Kong) or fax to (852) 2561 8196.
* The data are for reference only and are confidential.*

Personal Particulars

Name

Address

Day-time telephone

1 Sex 1.1 Male 1.2 Female

2 Age

2.1 <input type="checkbox"/> Under 21	2.2 <input type="checkbox"/> 21-30	2.3 <input type="checkbox"/> 31-40
2.4 <input type="checkbox"/> 41-50	2.5 <input type="checkbox"/> 51-60	2.6 <input type="checkbox"/> Over 60

3 Area of residence

3.1 <input type="checkbox"/> Hong Kong	3.2 <input type="checkbox"/> China, province/city
3.3 <input type="checkbox"/> USA	3.4 <input type="checkbox"/> UK
3.5 <input type="checkbox"/> Other countries	

4 Education

4.1 <input type="checkbox"/> Primary	4.2 <input type="checkbox"/> Secondary	4.3 <input type="checkbox"/> Post-secondary	4.4 <input type="checkbox"/> Tertiary
--------------------------------------	--	---	---------------------------------------

5 Occupation

5.1 <input type="checkbox"/> Professional	5.2 <input type="checkbox"/> Manager/Executive	
5.3 <input type="checkbox"/> Clerical/Office work	5.4 <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher	5.5 <input type="checkbox"/> Civil servant
5.6 <input type="checkbox"/> Retired	5.7 <input type="checkbox"/> Others, please specify	

6 Monthly personal income (US\$)

6.1 <input type="checkbox"/> Below \$1,500	6.2 <input type="checkbox"/> \$1,501~3,000	6.3 <input type="checkbox"/> \$3,001~5,000
6.4 <input type="checkbox"/> \$5,001~8,000	6.5 <input type="checkbox"/> \$8,001 or above	

7 Monthly family income (US\$)

7.1 <input type="checkbox"/> Below \$3,000	7.2 <input type="checkbox"/> \$3,001~\$6,000
7.3 <input type="checkbox"/> \$6,001~10,000	7.4 <input type="checkbox"/> \$10,001 or above

8 How many overseas trips do you make every year?

	For business	For leisure
1-3	8.11 <input type="checkbox"/>	8.12 <input type="checkbox"/>
4-7	8.21 <input type="checkbox"/>	8.22 <input type="checkbox"/>
8-10	8.31 <input type="checkbox"/>	8.32 <input type="checkbox"/>
More, please specify	8.41 <input type="checkbox"/>	8.42 <input type="checkbox"/>

9 How many trips to China do you make every year?

	For business	For leisure
1-5	9.11 <input type="checkbox"/>	9.12 <input type="checkbox"/>
6-10	9.21 <input type="checkbox"/>	9.22 <input type="checkbox"/>
11-20	9.31 <input type="checkbox"/>	9.32 <input type="checkbox"/>
More, please specify	9.41 <input type="checkbox"/>	9.42 <input type="checkbox"/>

Consumer Patterns

10 What other newspapers/magazines do you read regularly?

11 How much do you spend on entertainment per month (US\$)?

11.1 <input type="checkbox"/> Below \$200	11.2 <input type="checkbox"/> \$201~500
11.3 <input type="checkbox"/> \$501~1,000	11.4 <input type="checkbox"/> \$1,001 or above

12 How much do you spend on shopping per month (US\$)?

12.1 <input type="checkbox"/> Below \$200	12.2 <input type="checkbox"/> \$201~500
12.3 <input type="checkbox"/> \$501~1,000	12.4 <input type="checkbox"/> \$1,001 or above

13 Did you buy the following goods in the past 6 months?

13.1 <input type="checkbox"/> Tobacco/Alcohol	13.2 <input type="checkbox"/> Electrical appliances
13.3 <input type="checkbox"/> Jewellery/Watch	13.4 <input type="checkbox"/> Camera
13.5 <input type="checkbox"/> Perfume/Cosmetics	13.6 <input type="checkbox"/> Leather goods
13.7 <input type="checkbox"/> Sports equipment	13.8 <input type="checkbox"/> Luxury items
13.9 <input type="checkbox"/> Clothing	13.10 <input type="checkbox"/> Personal computer

14 What are your 3 most favourite brands of travel products?

14.1

14.2

14.3

15 Which airline do you usually fly with?

15.1 For leisure	15.2 For business
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.

16 In which airline class do you usually fly?

16.1 <input type="checkbox"/> First class	16.2 <input type="checkbox"/> Business class	16.3 <input type="checkbox"/> Economy class
---	--	---

17 Your hotel recommendations

Name of hotels	Country/Region
17.1	
17.2	
17.3	

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18 How long have you been reading *China Tourism*?

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| 18.1 <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 1 year | 18.2 <input type="checkbox"/> 1 to 2 year(s) | 18.3 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 to 5 years |
| 18.4 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 to 10 years | 18.5 <input type="checkbox"/> More than 10 years | |

19 Where/How did you first see *China Tourism*?

- | | |
|---|--|
| 19.1 <input type="checkbox"/> Newsstand/Bookshop | 19.2 <input type="checkbox"/> Library |
| 19.3 <input type="checkbox"/> Friend's recommendation | 19.4 <input type="checkbox"/> Hotel |
| 19.5 <input type="checkbox"/> Book fair | 19.6 <input type="checkbox"/> Airplane/Liner |
| 19.7 <input type="checkbox"/> Others, please specify | |

20 Why do you read *China Tourism*?

- | |
|--|
| 20.1 <input type="checkbox"/> For relaxation |
| 20.2 <input type="checkbox"/> To learn more about varied customs and cultures of China |
| 20.3 <input type="checkbox"/> To look for travel information |
| 20.4 <input type="checkbox"/> Others, please specify |

24 How many people read your copy?

- | | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 24.1 <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 3 | 24.2 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 to 6 | 24.3 <input type="checkbox"/> 7 to 9 |
| 24.4 <input type="checkbox"/> More, please specify | | |

Please give your opinion on the following:

	Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor
25 Recent topics	25.1 <input type="checkbox"/>	25.2 <input type="checkbox"/>	25.3 <input type="checkbox"/>	25.4 <input type="checkbox"/>	25.5 <input type="checkbox"/>
26 Photographs	26.1 <input type="checkbox"/>	26.2 <input type="checkbox"/>	26.3 <input type="checkbox"/>	26.4 <input type="checkbox"/>	26.5 <input type="checkbox"/>
27 Cover	27.1 <input type="checkbox"/>	27.2 <input type="checkbox"/>	27.3 <input type="checkbox"/>	27.4 <input type="checkbox"/>	27.5 <input type="checkbox"/>
28 Articles	28.1 <input type="checkbox"/>	28.2 <input type="checkbox"/>	28.3 <input type="checkbox"/>	28.4 <input type="checkbox"/>	28.5 <input type="checkbox"/>
29 Tourist information	29.1 <input type="checkbox"/>	29.2 <input type="checkbox"/>	29.3 <input type="checkbox"/>	29.4 <input type="checkbox"/>	29.5 <input type="checkbox"/>
30 Art design	30.1 <input type="checkbox"/>	30.2 <input type="checkbox"/>	30.3 <input type="checkbox"/>	30.4 <input type="checkbox"/>	30.5 <input type="checkbox"/>
31 Overall impression	31.1 <input type="checkbox"/>	31.2 <input type="checkbox"/>	31.3 <input type="checkbox"/>	31.4 <input type="checkbox"/>	31.5 <input type="checkbox"/>

21 How do you get your copy?

- | | |
|--|------------------|
| 21.1 <input type="checkbox"/> Subscription: Year(s) | Subscription no. |
| 21.2 <input type="checkbox"/> Buy from a newsstand | |
| 21.3 <input type="checkbox"/> From a hotel | |
| 21.4 <input type="checkbox"/> From a friend | |
| 21.5 <input type="checkbox"/> From other places, e.g. airplane | |

32 Price of subscription

- | |
|---|
| 32.1 <input type="checkbox"/> Inexpensive |
| 32.2 <input type="checkbox"/> Reasonable |
| 32.3 <input type="checkbox"/> Expensive |

33 Contents you would like to see

34 Places you would like to know more about

35 New columns you would like to add

36 Other comments

22 Is it difficult to come across a newsstand/bookshop selling *China Tourism*?

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 22.1 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | 22.2 <input type="checkbox"/> No |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|

23 How long do you spend on average reading your copy?

- | |
|--|
| 23.1 <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 1 hour |
| 23.2 <input type="checkbox"/> 1 to 2 hour(s) |
| 23.3 <input type="checkbox"/> Longer, please specify |

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